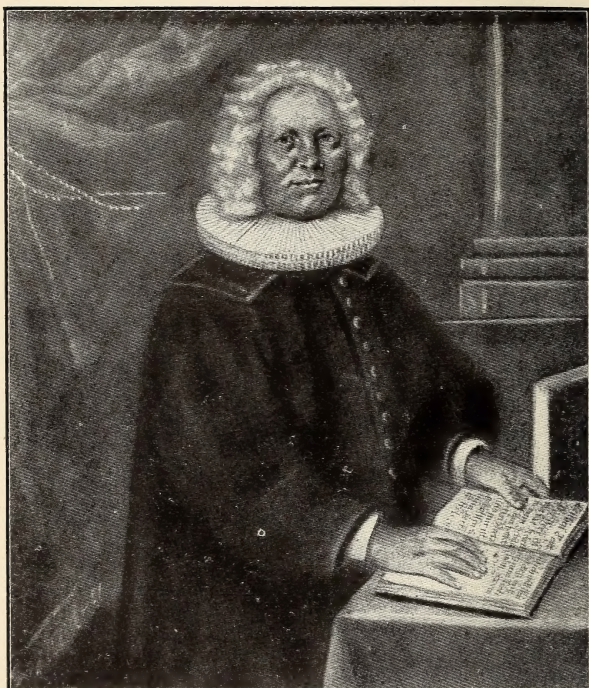


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Johann Friedrich Starck
Evangelischer Prediger und Consistorialis zu Frankfurt
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JOHN FREDERICK STARCK'S

DAILY HAND-BOOK

IN GOOD AND EVIL DAYS

CONTAINING

ALL THE MEDITATIONS AND PRAYERS
OF THE COMPLETE GERMAN ORIGINAL EDITION

TOGETHER WITH AN APPROPRIATE SELECTION OF

STANDARD ENGLISH HYMNS

FOR GENERAL USE, FOR THE AFFLICTED, THE
SICK, AND THE DYING

TRANSLATED BY

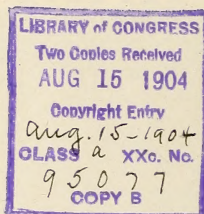
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Philip Melancthon"

WITH SIX HALF-TONE ENGRAVINGS

BURLINGTON, IOWA
GERMAN LITERARY BOARD
1904

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

FOR nearly two hundred years Starck's Daily Hand-book has been a standard book of devotion; and it is not likely to be superseded by anything superior for many years to come. First published in 1728, it was at once received with great favor. As new editions were demanded, the original dimensions of the work were increased by the addition of other prayers, until finally, in the edition of 1776, edited by the son of J. F. Starck, the book appeared in its completed form, containing prayers for almost every conceivable time and emergency.

It was felt that a new translation of this most excellent and valuable work into fluent, devotional, and idiomatic English was eminently desirable. What is here presented is an attempt to supply this want. The endeavor has been to give the book as smooth an English rendering as if in the first place it had been written in English. While, therefore, it is believed that the sense of the original is always given accurately, the aim has been to secure fluency of style rather than literalness of translation. Much care and time have been devoted to the Scripture verses and the

Scriptural phraseology, which form so large a part of Starck's Hand-book, and to which it owes so much of its beauty and value. It was felt imperative, in rendering these portions of the work into English, to use the exact language of the Authorized Version of the English Bible; otherwise most of the beauty and power of the original would necessarily be lost.

The translation here given is based on the original edition of 1776, which was edited by John Jacob Starck, a son of John Frederick Starck, after his father's death, and of which stereotyped reprints are published by the Vereinsbuchhandlung of Calw and Stuttgart, and by Theodor Rother of Leipzig. This edition was chosen, because it represents the final authoritative revision of the work, and may justly be regarded as the standard text. It not only contains a few more prayers (e. g. three for every festival instead of one) than other editions and their reprints; but many of its prayers are fuller and richer, and the entire work is more lucidly and logically arranged in five books instead of four.

The hymns contained in the original and composed by Starck have not been included in the present translation. It was believed by the translator, and by others whose opinion he sought, that it would be wiser and more desirable to sub-

stitute in their place appropriate selections from English hymnology, either standard English hymns or approved translations of standard German hymns. This has been done with the conviction, that no single author's hymns are all equally meritorious; that a selection of hymns which years of usage in the Church have stamped with its approval would be far more satisfactory than a translation of Starck's hymns; and that the use of hymns in family worship will be most profitable when the hymns are such as are used also in the public services of the Church. For the same reason, selections from familiar hymns in English have been substituted in that part of the Hand-book which is meant for the use of the dying and those who surround their bedside. Hymn verses will be most comforting to the sick and the dying when they are at least partially familiar from previous use. It is believed that the substitution of these standard selections from English hymnological treasures will add all the greater value to the Hand-book as a devotional work.

As thousands, and perhaps millions, who have used Starck's Hand-book in the past have been built up in faith and in godly living, have been drawn nearer to God in sweetest communion, have been strengthened and comforted under the trials of life, and have been prepared for a happy

departure from this world ; so we confidently believe that the regular use of the book in its present garb for private devotion and family worship will, under the blessing of God, be productive of most salutary results.

JOSEPH STUMP.

Phillipsburg, N. J., December, 1903.



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BOOK I.

PART I.

MORNING, NOON, AND EVENING DEVOTIONS.

FOR SABBATH EVE.

*The Christian Prepares Himself for Divine
Worship.*

MEDITATION.

Ps. 27: 4, One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

IT is evident from Gen. 3:4, where the offerings of Cain and Abel are expressly mentioned, that immediately after the fall into sin God enjoined upon the first man, Adam, the offering of sacrifices, and that this mode of worship was taught by Adam to his sons. These sacrifices were not offered in silence. On the contrary, those who brought them confessed their sins, prayed to God for His forgiveness, and declared their faith in the coming Messiah, Jesus Christ, who should shed His blood as a sacrifice

18 *Morning, Noon, and Evening Devotions.*

for them. On such occasions they also praised God for the benefits received from Him, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The seventh day was specially set apart and hallowed for this purpose by God Himself, who created the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

This form of worship was retained by the Patriarchs, and was practiced up to the time when God, in the wilderness, commanded the construction of the tabernacle, — a building which Solomon afterwards followed as a model in erecting the temple. Under the New Testament dispensation the Christians also set apart a day for the worship of the Lord, their God; namely, the Lord's Day or Sunday, on which Christ rose from the dead, and on which the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the disciples.

Whenever this day approaches, the Christian should (1) close his weekly labors early on Saturday evening, and free his hand from earthly things. (2) He should prepare himself for the approaching Sunday by prayer, and should thank God for the many blessings received during the week. (3) He should read the Gospel or Epistle lesson for the following day, meditate upon it, and thus prepare himself for a more devout hearing of God's Word on the morrow. (4) With such good thoughts in his mind, he should

retire early, in order that he may arise refreshed, and appear punctually at divine service.

PRAYER FOR SABBATH EVE.

Gracious and merciful God! I come into Thy holy presence to-day with praise and thanksgiving, because Thou hast so graciously preserved me during the past six days, and so bountifully blessed the labor of my hands. Thou hast preserved my going out and my coming in, guarded my way, and bestowed upon me many blessings in body and soul. For these mercies I render to Thee my heartfelt praise and thanks. Away now with earthly occupations! Away with care! I will now erect within my heart a temple to my God. My heart shall become a house of prayer, dedicated wholly to the service of my Lord. Forgetting those things which are behind, and laying aside the burden of my earthly toil and occupation, I will direct my thoughts to heaven, to God alone, that I may find my delight in Him.

O what unspeakable love God has shown in providing for men a day of rest from all their labors! This rest reminds us of the rest in Paradise, where, free from toilsome labor, we should have been constantly employed with the service and praise of God. This rest is a type of the heavenly rest; for there remaineth a rest for the

20 *Morning, Noon, and Evening Devotions.*

people of God, the promised rest of eternal life in heaven. There the believers shall be freed from labor, affliction, pain, and sin.

O merciful God! Enable me to spend the approaching Sunday in Thy fear and in Thy grace. Preserve me from evil companions, lest through their instrumentality Satan keep me away from Thy worship; and if any such evil persons should tempt me, grant that I may resist all their enticements. Guard me, lest I spend in idleness, indolence, wantonness, amusement, and sins, the holy day which Thou hast ordained for my growth in grace and for Thy praise and service, and thus do great injury to my soul. Grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that I may devote the entire day from morning till evening to Thee. Awake me early, that I may be among the first to appear in Thy house for praise, prayer, and song. Keep my soul in a constant frame of devotion, that no earthly cares may steal into my heart; and if any make their appearance there, help me to banish them by Thy power. If Satan should send me an evil neighbor who attempts to begin a worldly conversation with me in Thy house, enable me to turn a deaf ear to him; and let me, by my attentiveness, awaken and encourage him to worship Thee. When Thy Word is preached, open my heart, that I may receive and keep it as a precious treasure.

Grant that on this Sunday I may be strengthened in the faith, and grow in the knowledge of the truth. Let the Word that is preached change, sanctify, convert, and renew me, so that, as I grow in years, I may grow also in the inward man, in faith and piety, and may become a new creature, yea, a living member of the body of Christ. Let me finish the service in true devotion, carefully treasure what I have learned, and close the day with prayers and hymns of praise. Let me ever be mindful of the Word I have heard, that I may live, speak, and act in accordance with it and thus prove that I am not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the Word. Grant that I may thus hallow one Sunday and Sabbath after another, till Thou shalt take me to the everlasting joys of heaven, to the eternal Sabbath above, through Jesus Christ, my only Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

To thy temple I repair:
Lord, I love to worship there;
When, within the veil, I meet
Christ before the mercy-seat.

I through Him am reconciled,
I through Him become Thy child:
Abba, Father! Give me grace
In Thy courts to seek Thy face.

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While Thy glorious praise is sung,
Touch my lips, unloose my tongue,
That my joyful soul may bless
Christ the Lord, my righteousness.

While the prayers of saints ascend,
God of love, to mine attend;
Hear me, for Thy Spirit pleads;
Hear, for Jesus intercedes.

While I hearken to Thy Law,
Fill my soul with humble awe;
Till Thy Gospel bring to me
Life and immortality.

While Thy ministers proclaim
Peace and pardon in Thy name,
Through their voice, by faith may I
Hear Thee speaking from the sky.

From Thy house when I return,
May my heart within me burn;
And at evening let me say,
I have walked with God to-day.

—James Montgomery, 1812. alt.

FOR SUNDAY MORNING.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 5: 2. Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God: for unto Thee will I pray.

OUR whole life ought really to be a continuous prayer and giving of thanks; that is, we should daily call upon God for His blessing, help, strength, and grace, and, when we have received these, should thank Him for them. Therefore, O believer, when you awake from sleep in the morning, first of all lift up your eyes to heaven; think not first of your business and labor, and rush not at once to the pursuit of gain, but fall upon your knees, give thanks to God, and commend yourself to His protection. Do not imagine that you will lose too much time, if you devote half an hour every morning to prayer and the reading of a chapter out of the Bible or some devotional book. No: the time you spend in prayer will be returned to you a thousand-fold in blessings on your labor; and that which you have read will be sweet as honey to your mouth throughout the day.

Therefore, when you awake and rise from your bed in health, remember (1) that many pious

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Christians, much more pious perhaps than you, have spent the past night in anxiety and grief, in pain and sickness, in terror and dismay, while you reposed peacefully in your bed. (2) Remember that during the night others met with accidents, injury, peril and distress, while you remained unharmed. Therefore give thanks to God. (3) Beseech the Lord to keep you in His grace throughout the day, that you may not sin against Him or your neighbor. (4) Pray that He may be with you to guard and bless you in your business and occupation. (5) And surrender yourself so completely to God, that through the whole day you may abide in His love, speak of Him, think of Him, and never deliberately offend Him. Then doubt not, but that God will graciously hear your sighing and supplication, and bestow upon you during the day those things which will be profitable for you in body and soul.

MORNING PRAYER ON SUNDAY.

My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up. O merciful God, Thou art worthy to receive blessing and honor and glory. Who would not fear Thee, O King of nations? Who would not praise Thee, O loving Father? I come to Thee in this morning hour, and give Thee humble thanks, because Thou hast

been a bulwark around me and mine this night, and hast let me experience anew Thy mercy and faithfulness. Be with me and shield me to-day also in all my ways. Let this day be one of edification and quickening for my soul. In Thy mercy Thou hast made this day free from bodily labor, in order that Thou mightest carry on Thy work in me. O, do Thou therefore enlighten, sanctify, and instruct my soul, that I may lay up treasures which shall comfort me in danger and death, and support me under crosses and trials; and which neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal.

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within Thy gates, O Jerusalem. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple. My God! To-day it shall be my delight to listen to Thy Word, to be built up in Thee, to sing praises to Thy name, to pray fervently, and to yield my heart to Thee. How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul thirsteth for the living God. May I not be a forgetful hearer, but a doer of Thy Word. Open my heart like that of Lydia, that I may receive the seed of Thy Word with joy. Then seal my heart, that Satan may not

rob me of Thy Word again. Help me to lay to-day a firm foundation of true religion, of knowledge of my Lord Jesus, of faith, of self-denial, and of deadness to the world, that throughout the coming week I may think of what I have learned, act upon it, and bring forth good fruit.

Strengthen me against temptations, so that, if Satan should send any of his servants to me, I may not give to the world the hours which are sacred to Thee, nor sacrifice in their sinful company the time which I desire to devote to Thy honor and glory, thus bringing upon myself a heavy curse which might oppress me all the week to come. O, let my public and private devotions, my praying, hearing, reading and singing be acceptable unto Thee! Be Thou, O Jesus, Thyself my instructor, that I may grow in the inward man. Yea, do Thou dwell in me by faith until, in the realms above, I shall be inseparably united with Thee. Amen.

HYMN,

L. M.

Away from every mortal care,
 Away from earth, our souls retreat;
 We leave this worthless world afar,
 And wait and worship near Thy seat.

Lord, in the temples of Thy grace,
 We bow before Thee and adore:
 We view the glories of Thy face,
 And learn the wonders of Thy power.

While here our various wants we mourn,
United prayers ascend on high;
And faith expects a sure return
Of blessings in variety.

Father, my soul would here abide;
Or, if my feet must hence depart,
Still keep me, Father, near Thy side,
Still keep Thy dwelling in my heart.

—Watts. 1709.

THE CHRISTIAN SPENDS SUNDAY IN DEVOTION.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 84: 1, 2. How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

AMONG the many benefits which God has conferred upon man must be reckoned the appointment of a day of rest in each week, on which man is to be freed from labor and toil, and the bestowal of a special blessing upon all who observe this day properly. Consequently (1) the Christian should be careful not to spend this day in sloth and idleness; for that is the way in which horses, oxen, and other beasts of burden spend Sunday. (2) He should

be careful not to employ the day in feasting, drinking, and carousing; for what is sinful on any day is doubly so on the Lord's Day. (3) He should scrupulously avoid profaning the day by labor, by attending to earthly business, making pleasure-trips, collecting debts, making up accounts, hiring workmen, and the like; because all such occupations distract the mind. He should also avoid the giving and attending of feasts on Sunday, playing, dancing, and worldly company. All these things hinder the soul's edification, disturb its peace in God, prevent its growth in true religion, and are wholly opposed to the object of the Sabbath. Those who do these things are not the children of God, but empty professors of religion, for whom, according to their own confession, no day is too long except Sunday.

A true Christian will know how to make a better use of Sunday than this. He will employ it for the glory of God and the good of his own soul. (1) He will employ it for the glory of God by prayer, praise, singing, and the contemplation of the goodness and mercy of God which he has experienced during the past week and all the days of his life. (2) He will employ it for the good of his own soul by hearing the Word of God, in order that he may increase in the knowledge of God and in true religion. (3)

All this he should do not only for an hour or half an hour, but through the whole day. Much depends on the proper observance of Sunday. There is a blessing connected with it. Why is it that so many persons labor under a curse? And old proverb says, "If God's Word you truly heed, You will never come to need." (4) When he has heard God's Word, the Christian should keep it in an honest and good heart, live in accordance with it, act at once upon the rules of conduct which it gives, and accumulate for himself a treasure of pregnant and comforting Scripture passages, upon which he may draw in time of danger and in the hour of death.

PRAYER ON SUNDAY.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. This is the Lord's Day, and the day of rest granted to me by God. Therefore I will employ it for the glory of God in thanksgiving and prayer.

I thank Thee, O God, for the manifold gifts which Thou hast bestowed upon me on this day. On a Sunday Jesus my Saviour arose from the dead, and the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the apostles. Therefore it behooves me to call to mind to-day my redemption through Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, who was shed upon me abundantly in Holy Baptism.

I thank Thee for Thy pure and holy Word, which Thou causest to be preached on this day for the instruction and edification of my soul. I thank Thee for all the bodily and spiritual blessings which I have received from Thy Fatherly hand during my lifetime; for from my youth Thou hast been with me, hast led and preserved me, and hast bestowed many benefits upon me in body and soul. O who can count all thy mercies? They are innumerable.

This day shall, however, not only be for me a day of thanksgiving, but a day of prayer. I beseech Thee, my God and Father, let me spend this day in Thy fear. Preserve me from temptation, vain thoughts, and evil company. O that every artery were a tongue, and every drop of blood a voice, to laud and praise Thee, O Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost! O that not a single hour might pass away in which I do not spread abroad Thy praise! Seal in my heart the Word which I hear, that I may ponder it well, and regulate my conduct by it. And as I have now grown to be a week older, grant that I may increase in the knowledge of Thee, in love, and in piety, and may grow in the inward man. Give me, I beseech Thee, Thy Holy Spirit, that He may remind me of Thy Word during the coming week and all my life, and may rule and guide and lead me in all my

ways. Add Thy blessing to my labor and employment, and let me spend all my remaining days and years in Thy grace, till I reach, at last, that happy home above, where, with thanksgiving and prayer, I shall be permitted to keep the eternal Sabbath of heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

This is the day the Lord hath made;
He calls the hours His own:
Let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,
And praise surround the throne.

To-day He rose and left the dead,
And Satan's empire fell;
To-day the saints His triumph spread,
And all His wonders tell.

Hosanna to the anointed King,
To David's holy Son;
Help us, O Lord: descend and bring
Salvation from Thy throne.

Blest be the Lord who comes to men
With messages of grace;
Who comes in God the Father's Name
To save our sinful race.

Hosanna in the highest strains
The Church on earth can raise;
The highest heavens in which He reigns
Shall give Him nobler praise.

THE CHRISTIAN REFLECTS UPON THE
THREEFOLD SABBATH.

MEDITATION.

Heb. 4: 9, 11. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

IN order to spend Sunday in a manner well-pleasing to God, the Christian should remember that there is a threefold Sabbath to be kept. There is (1) a weekly Sabbath, which he should employ for the contemplation of the mercies which he has received from God. (2) There is also a daily or spiritual Sabbath, which is to be kept, not by the omission of our daily work or the spending of our time in idleness, but by the daily shunning of sin. By this we mean, that just as on Sunday the Christian abstains from his daily labor: so on every day he should abstain from wickedness and malice, be careful not to speak evil against God or his neighbor, not to do evil alone or in the company of others, and not to permit himself to be led astray by others, but to keep himself unspotted from the world. At the same time that he avoids these things, he should think of God frequently while he is at work, pray silently to Him, and beseech Him for the guidance and strengthening

of His Holy Spirit. This is the spiritual Sabbath which the child of God should celebrate daily.

He who devoutly observes the weekly Sabbath, and earnestly keeps the daily Sabbath, may rest assured that he will be permitted to celebrate (3) the eternal Sabbath of heaven. There the believing and elect children of God shall be freed from all bodily labor, from all crosses and trials, and from all sin. They shall see God face to face, dwell in His presence forever, and praise and serve Him without ceasing. O holy and glorious Sabbath, that shall never be disturbed! Those only shall have share in it, who abide in the faith and in the love of Jesus even unto death.

PRAYER ON SUNDAY.

Holy and merciful God! Since I celebrate to-day the Sabbath and day of rest on which, in accordance with Thy holy ordinance, I am freed from my week-day labors, in order that I may be edified by Thy Word, and may rejoice in Thee: I beseech Thee to grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that I may spend the day in true devotion by hearing, reading, and meditating on Thy holy Word, and that I may shun all sinful distractions, worldliness, evil company, and sin.

On this weekly Sabbath I call to mind also the daily spiritual Sabbath, on which I should rest and abstain from sin, and should consecrate my body and soul, and my entire life, unto Thee. By Thy grace, therefore, O my God, this shall be my daily task: to do Thy will, not my own, and to banish all evil thoughts and desires by Thy power, so that Thou mayest dwell in me, and mayest enlighten and sanctify me more and more. O God! Grant that this spiritual and daily Sabbath of my heart may never be disturbed. Do Thou pray in my heart, sing in my heart, and instruct within my heart; then shall my heart be Thy consecrated temple.

And when, at last, according to Thy will, I shall have ended the days of my earthly life and at the same time shall have ended this daily Sabbath, let me enter upon the heavenly and eternal Sabbath, where, in everlasting rest and the enjoyment of the bliss of heaven, I shall praise Thee in the temple of Thy glory. There, with all the Cherubim and Seraphim, I shall join in the refrain, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth. Grant me, O Lord, this blessedness at last. Amen.

HYMN.

7, 6. D.

O Day of rest and gladness,
O day of joy and light,
O balm of care and sadness,
Most beautiful, most bright;
On Thee the high and lowly,
Bending before the throne,
Sing Holy, Holy, Holy,
To the Great Three in One.

To-day on weary nations
The heavenly manna falls;
To holy convocations
The silver trumpet calls
Where Gospel light is glowing
With pure and radiant beams,
And living water flowing
With soul-refreshing streams.

New graces ever gaining
From this our day of rest,
We reach the rest remaining
To spirits of the blest:
To Holy Ghost be praises,
To Father and to Son;
The Church her voice upraises
To Thee, blest Three in One.

— *Christopher Wordsworth, 1862.*

EVENING PRAYER ON SUNDAY.

LORD, abide with me; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. O Thou everlasting and almighty God! How marvelous are Thy works, how unspeakable is the goodness which Thou dost manifest toward the children of men! I can tell of Thy grace and truth, Thy love and mercy; for in the day that is closing Thou hast been exceedingly merciful to me in body and soul. Thou hast fed my soul with the bread of life, and hast given me to drink of the living water. Thy word has been in my mouth sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. O let Thy Word through all my life be a light unto my path, that I may direct my way by it; then shall I not stumble, nor fall from Thy grace.

Thou hast also preserved and sustained my body, so that I have reached this evening in health. I am not worthy of the many mercies which Thou hast bestowed upon me. When I now retire to rest, do Thou, O my Guardian, stand by my side, keep watch over me, and fold Thy protecting arms about me. Let me ever walk in the light of the Lord, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. Let Thy Word, which I have heard and

learned, strike root in my heart as a holy seed, whose fruit shall be seen in my life, in piety, in the fear of God, in deadness to the world, and in complete consecration to Thee. Be Thou my shelter and defence against the heat of temptation and the fiery darts of Satan. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Ward off from me and mine all danger by fire or water, and misfortune of every kind; and let all who are distressed, or sick, or dying, experience Thy grace. Then on the morrow our mouth shall be filled with Thy praise, and we will proclaim Thy goodness to us in body and soul.

Forgive me, if I have not served Thee to-day with such zeal as I ought; and do not on that account take away Thy grace from me. In the new week let all things be new in me: give me a new love and a new desire for Thee. Help me to hate and forsake the sins which I committed in the week that is passed, so that all men may see that I have not spent this Sunday in vain. Help me to bear in mind that I have an immortal soul, so that I may be more concerned for the welfare of my soul than my body. I retire now, O God, to rest and sleep. In so doing, I am reminded of my last long sleep, in which I shall rest till, on the joyful morning of

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the resurrection, Thou shalt wake me to life eternal. Retire then, my body, to rest in thy chamber, but Thou, my soul, into the wounds of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Almighty God; Thy Word is cast
Like seed into the ground;
Now let the dew of heaven descend,
And righteous fruits abound.

Let not the foe of Christ and man
This holy seed remove;
But give it root in every heart,
To bring forth fruits of love.

Let not the world's deceitful cares
The rising plant destroy;
But let it yield a hundred-fold
The fruits of peace and joy.

Of as the precious seed is sown,
Thy quickening grace bestow,
That all whose souls the truth receive,
Its saving power may know.

—*John Carwood, 1616.*

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD AFTER
HEARING THE DIVINE WORD.

MEDITATION.

Jas. 1: 22. Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

THE children of this world abuse the privilege of hearing God's Word, just as they do all the other blessings of God. They are, in this respect, widely different from the children of God.

The children of this world imagine, (1) that, because they are freed from labor on Sunday, therefore the day is meant for their amusement and pleasure, and for the gratification of the flesh,—a view which is fundamentally false. (2) If they go to church at all, they attend divine service in the morning simply as a matter of form, and then devote the afternoon to pleasure, to the chase, to games, to sinful amusements, or to walking or driving; and they return home, if not intoxicated, at any rate filled with vain thoughts, sinful distractions of the mind, and worldly folly. (3) They do not heed the Word that has been preached; and if they were asked on Monday what benefit they have derived from going to church, what they have heard, and what they have learned, they

could not tell you. The devil immediately took the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved (Luke 8:12). (4) Even if they remember anything, they do not put into practice what they have learned.

True children of God, however, after having begun Sunday in the name of the Lord with prayer, (1) hear the Word of God reverently. (2) They recall at home what they have heard, mark it well, and rejoice over it as a precious treasure. (3) They think of it during the whole week, and endeavor to put it into practice.

In Old Testament times God chose for sacrifice those animals which ruminated. In like manner, such souls are dearest to him as ruminate over the Word which they have heard and read, meditate upon it, and constantly draw from it new nourishment, strength, and vitality; thus building themselves up unto life eternal.

PRAYER AFTER HEARING GOD'S WORD.

O God of all grace! How can I sufficiently thank Thee, how can I sufficiently praise and extol Thee for permitting me to enjoy this Sunday, on which I have listened to Thy Word, and have learned from it how to believe aright, live aright, and die in peace? Thou hast caused

Thy gracious will to be made known to me. Thou hast let me be taught what to avoid and what to do. Truly, Thou dost not permit Thyself to remain without a witness; and none shall have an excuse for disobedience. Thou givest us Thy holy Word and the sacraments, that we may use them as means of grace for our salvation. Thy Holy Spirit seeks through them to teach, enlighten, sanctify, and establish us in the faith.

O merciful God! Let me not be a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the Word. What will all my hearing profit me, if I do not obey? Therefore do Thou Thyself seal in me the Word which I have heard and read, and make it living, active and powerful in me. When the Word of life has entered and edified my heart, do Thou, O Lord, lock my heart's door, lest Satan rob me of it again, and I return home empty. Let me take warning from the thousands who hear Thy Word, and yet do not turn from their evil ways and sinful habits, but who rather become more wicked and defiant than before. What profit do they derive from their church-going, hearing, singing, and praying? Will not the Word condemn them all the more, because they have heard and known the will of the Lord, and yet have not obeyed it?

O my God! Let me this week become more pious and consecrated. Let me daily think of the Word which I have heard, speak of it with my family, rejoice over it, and constantly obey it. Have I learned from Thy holy Word that I should be meek, humble and merciful? O then grant me grace to be always mindful of my duty. Let me never give way to anger, revenge, pride, or unmercifulness, but let me love my enemies, deny myself, and do good to the poor and the needy. Have I heard that I should subdue my lusts and evil thoughts, crucify self, put off the old man and put on the new, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world? Then grant me grace and strength to exercise myself daily in these duties, and to perform Thy will. And though at first I shall make but little progress, help me to grow in holiness, and to purify myself more and more from all sin of body and soul.

As the children of this world guard and keep their earthly possessions with the greatest care; even so give me strength to guard as a priceless treasure the holy truths, the precious doctrines, and the powerful exhortations to holy living, given to me in Thy Word, and daily to add to that treasure: so that in all times of extremity, in trouble, in affliction, in sickness, and in the hour of death, I may be able to draw

from it one passage of Scripture after another for my consolation. Yea, my God, let me daily increase, not only in age, but in wisdom, piety, godliness, and knowledge of Thy will, and in favor with God and men. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M. D.

Accept, O Lord, Thy servant's thanks
For Thy enlivening Word,
By Thy most Holy Spirit taught,
By holy prophets heard.
That Word in Thy recording Book
From age to age descends:
Her teaching here Thy Church begins,
And here her teaching ends.

Whate'er of truth the soul can need
To clear her darkling sight,
Whate'er to check the wandering feet,
And guide their course aright;
Whate'er of fear the bad to daunt,
Of hope the good to cheer;
All that may profit man, O Lord,
Thy bounty gives us here.

Joined with our household's little church,
And in our lonely hours,
And in the assembly of the saints,
That sacred Word be ours,
To read and hear, to mark and learn,
And inwardly digest;
And He who gave the Word, may He
On those who learn it, rest.

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Thence on our hearts may lively faith
Celestial comfort pour,
And patience, lightener of our ills,
And hope that looks before:
That we with Thy united Church,
May lift our souls above,
And with one heart and mouth proclaim
Thy glory, God of love.

—*Richard Mant, 1837.*

MORNING PRAYER ON MONDAY.

CAUSE me to hear Thy loving kindness in the morning; for in Thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto Thee. O holy, merciful, and only-wise God, who hast created the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and hast decreed that day and night, light and darkness, labor and rest shall follow each other in regular succession, so that men and beasts may recruit their strength! In this morning hour I laud and praise Thee for Thy wisdom and Fatherly faithfulness; for Thou hast heard my prayer, hast guarded me during the past night against sickness and other misfortune, and hast thrown Thy protection around all that is mine.

Lord, great and marvelous are Thy works! Thy mercy is great above the heavens, and Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds. I slept, but Thou didst wake; I lay in sleep as one who was dead, but Thou hast permitted me to behold again the light of the sun. O my God, be Thou to-day also my Helper and Saviour, my Strength and Stay, my Refuge and Consolation. Watch over me, that under Thy guardian care I may follow my daily occupation in safety, and, if Thou dost will it, reach the evening unharmed. My God, let Thy blessing always go before and follow after me. In all that I begin in Thy name bless me with wisdom and success, and let me never desire anything which Thou dost not approve. With the rising of the sun, let the light of the Holy Spirit arise in my heart, that I may spend the day in Thy fear and love, and in obedience to Thy will. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me; cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Let the Holy Spirit lead, instruct, and guide me, that I may not wilfully sin against Thee to-day. And if I should be tempted to do wrong, may He remind me of my duty, and by His inward admonitions keep me faithful.

I put on my clothes; Lord, do Thou clothe me with the robe of Thy righteousness. I wash my-

self; Lord Jesus, do Thou wash me with Thy precious blood, and cleanse me from all my sins. Guard me, that I may never walk in the counsel of the ungodly, nor sit in the seat of the scornful, whose friendship would mean Thy enmity. If I should seek the friendship of the world and share in its sinful doings, Thou wouldest become my enemy. O my God, impress upon my heart the word: "Walk before me and be Thou perfect." How many begin a week but do not conclude it; how many, when it ends, are sick or even in their graves! Therefore let me ever follow after holiness, without which no man shall see Thee. Let me be concerned always to think and say and do what is well-pleasing to Thee, so that I may ever remain in a state of grace, and be found safe in the wounds of Jesus. The grace of the Father preserve me; the love of the Son sanctify me; the communion of the Holy Ghost make me fruitful unto all good works. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS FOR GOD'S
BLESSING AT THE BEGINNING
OF THE WEEK.

MEDITATION.

Col. 3: 17. Whatsoever ye do in word or deed,
do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks
to God and the Father by Him.

IF the Christian has reason to pray at the beginning of each new day, how much more reason has he not to lift his heart and eyes to God at the beginning of each new week. How many persons spend Sunday, the first day of the week, in health, but are dead and buried before the following Saturday. How many begin a week happy and prosperous, but are overwhelmed with misfortune as with a flood before the week ends, and conclude it in sorrow and pain amid a thousand tears and the wringing of hands. This, my dear Christian, may happen also to you. Therefore at the beginning of the week you should turn to God.

A true Christian should (1) pray to God for His Holy Spirit to sanctify his heart, lest he fall into sin, offend God, wound his own conscience, or wrong his neighbor, and thus burden his soul with a heavy responsibility. (2) He should not neglect his prayers and the worship of God dur-

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ing the week, but should faithfully attend not only the Sunday services, but such other services also as are held during the week. (3) Because the blessing of God is needed upon our labors, he should pray for that blessing. In the midst of his labors he should think of God, and should begin, continue, and end his work with prayer. (4) He should be careful in his speech, conduct himself in a Christian manner, keep God before his eyes, and remember that one week after another will pass away, till the last week of his life arrives, and his soul must appear before God to give an account. He who does these things can begin the week with God's blessing, and end it under His protection. And even if it should prove to be a week of heavy crosses, God will be and remain His Helper, Saviour, and Friend.

PRAYER ON MONDAY.

O loving and merciful God! By Thy grace I begin this new week, but I do not know what it has in store for me. How much evil and misfortune may befall us in a single day! How much more in a whole week! Therefore at the very beginning of this week I come to Thee, and commend myself wholly to Thy keeping.

O my God! Grant me Thy Holy Spirit to sanctify, lead, and direct me, and to bear witness with my spirit that I am Thy child. Let

Thy blessing rest on me throughout this week. Bless my going out and my coming in, bless my daily occupation and business, bless each step I take. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. If Thou ledest me, I shall not go astray. If Thou keepest me, I shall not fall. Therefore let Thy mercy and faithfulness guard me in all my ways. Bless all that is mine, and let it prosper under Thy care.

O my God and faithful Father! Protect and guard me against harm, danger, loss, and misfortune. Let me remain day and night beneath the shelter of Thy grace. Guard my house on every side like the house of Job. Let Thy angels barricade me on every hand; then shall no misfortune overwhelm me, however great it may be. Hear my prayer when I cry unto Thee, and let me not go unheard from the throne of Thy grace. Preserve me from great transgressions. Show me Thy ways, O Lord; lead me in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. Grant that during this week I may become more pious and godly, and may increase in the knowledge and love of Thee. And as I leave week after week behind me, grant that I may grow in the inward man, and may add to my faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temper-

ance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity: so that, when the last week of my life arrives, I may be assured of Thy grace. Should this week prove to be one of afflictions, strengthen me by Thy Holy Spirit, that by Thy help I may patiently endure and overcome them. Be Thou my Helper and Saviour in every time of need. And now, together with all pious Christians, I commit myself, body and soul, with all that I possess, to Thy Fatherly care. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Now that the sun is beaming bright,
 Once more to God we pray,
 That He, the uncreated Light,
 May guard our souls this day.

No sinful word, no deed of wrong,
 Nor thoughts that idly rove;
 But simple truth be on our tongue,
 And in our hearts be love.

And while the hours in order flow,
 O Christ, securely fence
 Our gates, beleaguered by the foe,
 The gate of every sense.

And grant that to Thine honor, Lord,
 Our daily toil may tend:
 That we begin it at Thy Word,
 And in Thy favor end.

—*John Henry Newman, Tr. 1842. a.*

MEDITATION ON MONDAY EVENING.

Ps. 4: 8. I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety.

SINCE gratitude is a lovely grace, well-pleasing to God and men, the Christian should not forget to be thankful when God has permitted him to live through the day and to reach the evening in safety. It is deplorable that so many persons spend days, and weeks, and months, and even years, without any acknowledgement of God's goodness to them. They enjoy the protection, help, and support of God; yet they never thank Him, but regard it entirely as a matter of course that they should be well and happy and prosperous, as though God were obliged to preserve them and let them prosper. But separate yourself, O believer, from such unthankful souls. When you have spent the day in safety under God's protection and care, when the sun declines and the evening shadows fall, then lift up your eyes to heaven in thanksgiving and prayer.

Give thanks to God (1) because He has preserved you against danger throughout the day; and bear in mind that many persons have, perhaps, spent in misery the day which passed so

happily for you. While you dwelt in safety, others have lost their health. Though well and strong in the morning, they are found lying sick in their beds in the evening. And how many others have, in a single day, been reduced to a state of penury of which they little dreamed in the morning.

Pray to God (2) for the forgiveness of your sins. Examine your words and deeds. Have you during the day spoken against God or your neighbor? Have you done anything which is condemned by your own conscience and the Christian religion? O then do not retire to rest until you have besought God to pardon you. (3) Remember that perhaps this very night your soul will be required of you by God. O, therefore, make your peace with Him before you close your eyes in slumber. (4) Pray to God for His protection and the guardian care of His holy angels to ward off all danger from you. (5) And if you should awake from sleep during the night, think of God and give thanks to Him. Then shall your sleep be calm and peaceful, in His arms, and under the guardian care of His holy angels.

EVENING PRAYER ON MONDAY.

I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety. O eternal and almighty God, these are the even-

ing thoughts with which I seek my rest. How shall I give Thee sufficient thanks for Thy goodness? Thou hast kept me in all my ways, so that I have not dashed my foot against a stone. Thou hast supplied me with food and drink; Thou hast comforted and refreshed me; Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit; and through Thee and Thy goodness I have been permitted to live to this day. All these and other mercies are voices which call upon me to give praise to Thee. Therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

Forgive me, O Lord, in mercy forgive me, if I have not kept the example of my Lord Jesus before my eyes to-day, but have slighted Thy commandments, lived with the world, followed its ways, and given the rein to my desires. Wert Thou not a long-suffering God, yea, the very Father of Mercies, I should no longer be alive; for no man could forbear with me as long as Thou hast forborne. But Thou hast done so, in order that Thou mightest give me time for repentance and conversion. O Lord, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes. The day has now passed away: O Lord, blot out my sins and disperse them as mist; remember them no more against me forever. In true sincerity of heart I make solemn promise, O Lord, that I will hence-

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forth serve Thee diligently, and regulate my life by Thy Word.

Protect me this night against all the wiles of the devil, and shield me from misfortune and harm. When I fall asleep, do Thou, O Jesus, Thyself close my eyes, and hold before my heart Thy bleeding image, that I may not forget Thee. Let my soul constantly desire and long after Thee, ever hold fast to Thee, and remain Thine even while I sleep. Be my Light in darkness, my Refuge in distress. When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. I know none to whom to go, save to Thee, O almighty God. My Father is with me, why then should I fear, though I lie in solitude and sleep? My Jesus, the Light of my soul, is with me, though my bodily eye be closed. The Holy Ghost is with me, and bears witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, even though I lie insensible in slumber. Wrapped in the protection of the Triune God, I sleep secure like Jacob; I slumber unconcerned as a child on its mother's breast; I sleep protected like Peter. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER ON TUESDAY.

AWAKE, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. O Thou gracious God, whose mercies and faithfulness are new every morning! I thank and praise Thee with heart and voice, that Thou hast again permitted me to arise from my bed in health, and hast kept my body from harm and my soul from sin. How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings, and find there mighty protection. After the darkness I behold again the light of the sun: grant me grace to walk this day in Thy light, and to shun the works of darkness. I regard that day lost on which I have served the world, and have let my lips, my limbs, and my senses be ruled by the habits and follies of the world, — a course for which I must one day give an account before Thy judgment-throne. I therefore offer myself wholly to Thee with body and soul. Let me wish nothing, undertake nothing, and plan nothing but what is pleasing to Thee, so that the whole day may be hallowed unto Thee. Let me constantly live, speak, and act as if this day must be my last.

Now that the darkness is past, in which I lay as a child asleep in Thy arms, and I awake to consciousness once more, I know not whither to turn but to Thee. I knock at the door of Thy grace; I turn to the fountain-head, whence I draw blessing after blessing and grace after grace. What Thou dost bless is blessed forever. When Thou openest Thy liberal hand, Thou satisfiest the desire of every living thing. Give me counsel when I need counsel; direct my plans and undertakings according to Thy will. Kindle in me the flame of divine love, that I may this day show forth my faith by my works, abide in true love to Thee and my neighbor, and reach the evening with a good conscience. Unto Thee will I cry, O Lord, my Rock; be not silent to me: lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. Hear the voice of my supplications as I lift up my hands toward Thy sanctuary. Let the prayer of the wretched, the sorrowing, the sick, and the prayer of my house and of all believers find a hearing at Thy throne of grace. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN REJOICES OVER HIS REGENERATION.

MEDITATION ON TUESDAY.

1 Pet. 1: 3, 4. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

HE that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. He that rejoices, let him rejoice over such things as can make him eternally happy. If there be anything concerning which a Christian may justly glory and rejoice, it is assuredly his regeneration,—the fact that he has been baptized, and has thus become a child of God.

In Holy Baptism, (1) we have been received into sonship with God. As our Father, God will sustain, preserve, and provide for us, His children, and will never forsake us. (2) We have received the righteousness of Christ. All the merit which Jesus has acquired by His sufferings and death has been bestowed upon us in Holy Baptism, and has become our possession. We are planted in Him. He is the vine; we are the branches. Through Him we receive strength to do right, and obtain light, wisdom, and grace.

(3) There is given to us the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, to abide in us, sanctify our hearts, control our tongue, and regulate our whole life according to the Word and will of God. Through the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit we are more and more drawn away from sin, and are made to grow in faith and godliness, just as a new-born child grows in age and strength. (4) We receive eternal life, and shall share in the eternal joys and glories of heaven.

Whoever realizes these blessings, surely has abundant reason to rejoice in God. But he should be on his guard that (1) he may not forfeit the grace which has been bestowed upon him; (2) that he may walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called; (3) that he may not love the world, nor delight in the society of the worldly, nor deliberately sin against God; and (4) that he may, as a true child, be obedient to his heavenly Father, follow the example of the Lord Jesus, and never resist the promptings of the Holy Spirit. If he thus conducts himself, he shall enjoy the grace and help and comfort of the Triune God in time and eternity.

PRAYER ON TUESDAY.

O mighty God and dearest Father! How shall I sufficiently acknowledge, laud and magnify Thy love, which has taken pity on my soul

and rescued it from destruction? What glory hast Thou not bestowed upon me in Holy Baptism, receiving me as Thine own child! Men boast of their noble birth, exalted position, and earthly wealth. But I value still more highly the blessedness which belongs to me as Thy child. For if we are children of God, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. Since I am a child of God, my heavenly Father will keep, guide, sustain, and defend me, and will never under any circumstances forsake me. He will not only be my Stay in life, but my Joy in death. He will quicken, strengthen, and comfort me. And when I depart from this world, He will take me to the life of joy above.

O dearest Father, grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may constantly remind me of this blessedness which is mine. I am as yet in the world, and dwell among the children of men. O guard me, that I may not follow the example of the wordlings and live in sin, nor in any way endanger my salvation by conforming to their ways. If I see others doing wrong, or hear them speaking evil, let me remember that I am a child of God, and that such sins and vices are unbecoming to me. Enable me by Thy grace to say to the world: "My divine sonship and

heavenly inheritance shall not be bartered for thy pleasures and vanities." O my Jesus! Thou knowest that I love Thee, and that I am filled with genuine sorrow whenever I fail to love Thee as I would and should. O, accept my heart's desires, and enable me to lead a life of faith and holiness and devotion and purity and child-like humility. Let me love, honor, fear, and follow Thee, that I may live and die as Thy child, and may, as Thy child, share in the joys of heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O for a principle within
Of jealous godly fear!
O for a tender dread of sin,
A pain to feel it near!

That I from Thee no more may part,
No more Thy goodness grieve,
The filial awe, the loving heart,
The tender conscience give.

Quick as the apple of an eye,
O God, my conscience make;
Awake my soul when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake.

If to the right or left I stray,
That moment, Lord, reprove;
Nor let me wander far away,
Nor ever grieve Thy love.

O may the least omission pain
My well-instructed soul,
And drive me to the blood again,
Which makes the wounded whole.

—*C. Wesley, 1749. a.*

EVENING PRAYER ON TUESDAY.

THE Lord is on my side; I will not fear:
what can man do unto me? With these
words I come into Thy presence, O gra-
cious and loving God, in this evening hour, and
give Thee humble thanks, because Thou hast
permitted me to spend this day under Thy Fath-
erly protection, Thy loving care, Thy gracious
guidance, and Thy abundant blessing. Lord,
Thy goodness is great, and Thy compassions fail
not. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call
upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth.
He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him;
He also will hear their cry and will save them.

O my God! How swiftly a day passes away!
As an arrow shot from the bow, so swiftly our
years do fly. Therefore make me to know mine
end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that
I may know how frail I am. Behold, Thou hast
made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age
is as nothing before Thee. We must all appear

before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Therefore I enter into judgment with myself, and inquire: My soul, how hast thou spent this day? Hast thou been employed with thoughts of good? Has God remained united with thee, or hast thou grieved Him by deliberate and wilful sin? Hast thou spoken what was honest and pure and of good report? Hast thou spread abroad God's praise? Or hast thou overflowed with filthiness and foolish talking? Whither have ye gone, ye feet? What have ye done, ye hands? What have ye heard, ye ears? What have ye looked upon, ye eyes? What has been thy desire and aim and effort to-day, my heart?

O my God! If I must give answer to all these questions, how shall I stand in Thy sight? O Lord, with the passing day take away also my transgressions. O Jesus, cleanse me from my sins with Thy precious blood. O Holy Spirit, seal unto me the forgiveness of all my sins before I fall asleep, so that, if this night should prove to be my last, I may not perish eternally. If I am thus absolved from my sins, then, O Triune God, I shall sleep in peace; and on the morrow I will avoid with greater diligence all that is displeasing to Thee. My Father, spread

the covering of Thy love over me and mine. My Jesus, let me repose in peace and safety in Thy wounds. O Holy Spirit, cause the last sigh with which I fall asleep to be a committal of my soul into the hands of God. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER ON WEDNESDAY.

WHEN I awake, I am still with Thee! O gracious and merciful God, my Rock, my Fortress, and my Deliverer, my Buckler and the Horn of my Salvation, and my High Tower! In this morning hour I lift up my voice to the throne of Thy grace, and thank Thee that Thou hast spread Thy wings over me during the past night, and hast protected my body and soul from harm. Blessed be the Lord every day, and praised be His name forever and ever. My God, Thou sparest my life from day to day, in order that I may prepare myself for eternity, and may yield myself to Thee as Thy possession and habitation. Thou hast created me for life eternal, and wouldest not have that I should perish, but that I should repent and live. Therefore let me employ this day in working out my own salvation with fear and trembling. I am now in the middle of the week; if it be Thy

will, let me pass its remaining days under Thy protection and grace. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, do Thou revive me. Stretch forth Thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and let Thy right hand save me. O Jesus, my Mediator! Dwell in my heart, that I may turn to Thee amid all the vicissitudes of life, in trouble, in distress, and in the hour of death, and find help in Thee. If God be for me, who can be against me? O dearest Saviour! Let me tread to-day in Thy footsteps, and walk even as Thou didst walk. Then shall I escape the allurements of the world and the deceptions of my own heart.

Be with me as I follow my earthly occupation. In the fulness of faith I say: Lord I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. Whether I sleep or wake, and wherever I go or am, let Thy blessing rest upon me. While I pursue my daily calling, let my heart turn constantly to Thee. And should my heart be inclined to entangle itself in the lusts and pleasures of the world, give me strength to tear it loose from these things, and to sink it into Thy love, my Father, and into Thy wounds, my Jesus, so that it may not stray from Thy fellowship, and in the evening may still be found in Thee. If a conflict awaits me today, help me to overcome; if a sinful thought awakes in my heart or an

unseemly word rises to my lips, give me strength to suppress it by Thy Holy Spirit. Watch over my household; and let the light of Thy grace shine upon all who are sick or sorrowing. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS GOD TO WEAN
HIM FROM THE WORLD.

MEDITATION ON WEDNESDAY.

Rom. 12: 2. Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

WHEN the Christian remembers that the love of the world, like a weed, grows spontaneously in the soul, while the fear and love of God, like a beautiful and fragrant flower, must be planted and tenderly cultivated, he can readily see what circumspection and labor are required of him. He should therefore (1) recognize that the world is both in him and around him. Within him are the evil lusts, the deceitful arts, and the sinful desires and thoughts of his heart. Without are the example, the enticements, and the temptations of wicked men. (2) The Christian must resist these evil influences. He must overcome

the lusts of his own heart by prayer and supplication, and the allurements of the world by the avoidance of its society, habits, customs, and manners. (3) But since he cannot do this by his own power, he must pray fervently to God for grace and strength.

This separation from the world (4) must not be understood to mean that we must lock ourselves up, and refuse to speak to any one or to associate with other people; but that we must refuse to do wrong or to imitate the wicked works of the worldling. For if we would have absolutely nothing to do with worldly people, we should, as St. Paul declares, have to go out of the world entirely. We are to be in the world without following its wicked ways, just as Joseph was in Egypt, Lot in Sodom, and Daniel and his companions in Babylon. (5) This separation from the world is not to be effected for a few days, for appearance's sake, just before we go to the confessional service and the Lord's Supper, but is to be continuous. When the world is driven out of the heart, Jesus enters and dwells there.

PRAYER ON WEDNESDAY.

O merciful and loving God: how great is Thy goodness toward us, in that Thou dost so patiently bear with our faults and weaknesses,

and dost not at once measure out upon us the punishment which we have deserved! O, Thou hast opened my eyes through Thy Word, so that I now see myself in the right light, and recognize the depravity of my heart. I feel that the world is within and without me. Within me are the evil desires of my heart, its sinful inclinations, and its promptings to evil. Around me are wicked men, who would lead me into sin by their example and temptations. Alas, my natural evil heart takes more pleasure in them than in Thy holy Word or in the holy life which I should lead in accordance with Thy Word. Woe is me, that I have so long, so often, and so readily permitted myself to be allured and led astray by the world! When I think of the follies of my youthful years, I am ashamed to lift up my eyes to Thee. I was more concerned to please the world than Thee; I clung more to the world than to Thee. And thus I offended Thee, wounded my conscience, and incurred Thy wrath.

But behold, O God, I turn from my evil ways, and repent in dust and ashes. I separate myself from the world, that Thou alone mayest possess and rule my heart. Let Thy Holy Spirit sanctify me wholly, and cleanse me from every vestige of worldliness. Keep before my eyes the dreadful end which awaits the children of

this world, so that I may love, follow, and obey Thee, and not the world. Restrain me whenever I show any inclination to live with the world or to indulge in its sins. Let me always keep Thy fear before my eyes. Remind me ever, that Thou hast created me for Thy service, and that I must daily put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Cause the world to become more and more distasteful to me; and holiness, the fear of God, and heaven to become more and more attractive. Grant me grace to despise and shun the fleeting lusts and pleasures of the world, remembering that nothing but anxiety, distress of conscience, and eternal destruction can follow upon them. Destroy within me every remnant of the world and its love, and plant Thy holy fear within my heart. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With light and comfort from above.
Be Thou my Guardian, Thou my Guide;
O'er every thought and step preside.

The light of truth to me display,
That I may know and choose Thy way;
Plant holy fear within my heart,
That I from Thee may ne'er depart.

Conduct me safe, conduct me far
From every sin and hurtful snare;
Lead me to God, my final Rest,
In His enjoyment to be blest.

Lead me to holiness, the road
That I must take to dwell with God;
Lead to Thy Word, that rules must give,
And sure directions how to live.

Lead me to Christ, the living Way,
Nor let me from His pastures stray.
Lead me to heaven, the seat of bliss,
Where pleasure in perfection is.

— *Simon Browne, 1720. a.*

EVENING PRAYER ON WEDNESDAY.

I LAID me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me. O holy, merciful and only-wise God! Thou hast again permitted me this day to experience that Thou art the true Father of our race, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named. In Thine infinite mercy Thou hast cared for me, and provided for all my wants. O Lord, I am not worthy of the least of the many mercies which Thou dost bestow upon me. What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me, who am but dust and ashes? Despise not the humble offer-

ing of praise which I bring to Thee in this evening hour, and let Thy grace continue to rest upon me.

Forgive me, O merciful God, for all my sins against Thee this day in thought or word or deed. And grant, that, as I lay aside my clothes, I may also lay aside all evil habits, improper conduct, and sins, and may on the morrow, and during all my future life, hate and forsake them. Help me to put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Let me, together with all my relatives and the members of my household, sleep in peace and safety beneath the shadow of Thy wings.

The sun has set; but do Thou, O Jesus, Thou Sun of Righteousness, shine within my heart. Fill my soul with good impulses even while I sleep; so that, when I awake, the thought of Thee may be present in my heart. And grant, that on sleepless nights I may think of Thee and Thy goodness, of Thy faithfulness and gracious guidance, and may thus banish all foolish cares and sinful thoughts. Renew my strength through sleep, that I may arise in the morning refreshed and cheerful. As the shep-

herd watches over his flock, even so do Thou watch over me in body and soul.

But if, for the trial of my faith and patience and hope, Thou shouldest permit misfortune of any kind to befall me, then remember, O God, that I am Thy child; that without Thee I can do nothing; and that I depend on Thee, as my Father, to send me deliverance and help from Thy sanctuary. Be my Joy in sorrow, my Comfort in affliction, my Refuge in distress. Let the thought of Thy omnipresence and Thy all-seeing eye keep me by day and by night from sinning against Thee. As the shadows of night settle down upon me, I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER ON THURSDAY.

GIVE ear to my words, O Lord, consider my meditation. Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God; for unto Thee will I pray. O gracious and merciful God! I laud and magnify Thee in this morning hour, not only because Thou hast sustained and preserved me with Fatherly care from my youth up,

but also because Thou hast been my Strength and Shield during the past night, and hast permitted me to rise again in health to welcome the light of day.

O Thou in whose favor is life! What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? I lay unconscious in sleep, but Thy visitation preserved my spirit. Thou didst surround me and my house with an angel-guard, so that no harm or misfortune could befall me. Thou hast refreshed me with a peaceful sleep, such as was, perhaps, denied to many sick, sorrowing, and anxious souls. And yet I deserved chastisement fully as much and even more than they. For I have not been as grateful to Thee as I should have been for the unspeakable mercies which I have received from Thee during all my life, nor have I offered to Thee such unceasing praise and thanks as I ought.

But by Thy grace I will begin to-day to make amends for my sinful neglect. I promise Thee, in this morning hour, that I will serve Thee with body and soul, and will yield myself wholly unto Thee. My lips shall not offend Thee to-day, nor burden me with a heavy responsibility by engaging in foolish and sinful conversation. My feet shall shun all sinful paths. Mine eyes shall not gaze upon what

Thou hast forbidden. My hands shall not engage in deeds of unrighteousness. My ears shall be turned away from false doctrine, and from evil communications which corrupt good manners. I will devote myself, O Triune God, wholly to Thy service. O, do Thou dwell in me, and sanctify, guide, and cleanse me more and more by Thy grace!

Let me seek to-day the society of the godly. And if, in the course of my daily occupation, I shall be thrown into the company of wicked persons, preserve my heart and conscience from any share in their sinful words and deeds. Bless my labors, so that, in child-like dependence on Thy Providence, I may do my work cheerfully, and be assured that Thy blessing ever rests upon me. And now I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. Do thou, O Lord, bless and prosper and preserve me here in time and throughout eternity. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN WOULD FOLLOW JESUS.

MEDITATION ON THURSDAY.

Matt. 16: 24. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

LORD, "see if there be any wicked way in me." This, according to Ps. 139:24, should be the daily prayer of the true Christian. Since a careful traveler inquires diligently whether he is on the right road or not, surely a Christian should anxiously inquire concerning the way to heaven. Many deceivers are entered into the world, says St. John; consequently the Christian must be on his guard, lest he be deceived.

Accordingly the true Christian (1) does not follow the children of the world who seek to induce him to join in their sinful merry-makings; for by so doing he would expose his soul to too great a peril. Still less does he follow the promptings of his own evil heart; but, when a thought comes into his mind he always inquires, Is this right? Neither does he follow the enticements of Satan, but (2) the teachings of the Holy Scriptures, which show him what he should believe, and what he should do or omit. The Scriptures are his rule of life. What they do not al-

low, he earnestly shuns. He particularly (3) follows the Lord Jesus, who has given us an example, that we should follow His steps. And the steps of Jesus in which we are to walk are His humility, patience, meekness, purity, kindness, and godliness — virtues which He manifested in His earthly life for our imitation. To imitate these is truly to follow Him. The true Christian also (4) follows the example of other good Christians. When he sees that they are fervent in prayer, reverent toward God, charitable to the poor, and the like, he seeks to imitate their actions. (5) This following is to be one that continues till death. Then shall be fulfilled in such souls the words of St. John in Revelation 14:4, "They follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

PRAYER ON THURSDAY.

O my God and Lord! My sole desire is, so to live that after death I may enter into life eternal. I always rejoice when I read in Thy Word, that the elect in heaven follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. But I also know full well, that whoever would follow the Lamb in glory must follow Him here on earth. When I reflect upon this fact, I am deeply concerned for my salvation. Many offer themselves as guides. Satan invites and tempts me to follow him; and the world holds its example, ways, and society be-

fore my eyes. But I fear, if I should follow these now, I should also have to follow them after death to hell and destruction.

Therefore, O Jesus, I will follow Thee. Then shall I be pursuing the best and safest and happiest way. I will follow Thee in faith, in love, in humility, in obedience, in godliness, and in purity. Christ has left us an example, that we should follow His steps. His example shall ever be before my eyes. Like Jesus, I will love and honor my heavenly Father, and keep His holy will. Like Him, I will love my fellow-men, and do good to them. Like Him, I will gladly forgive my enemies. Like Him, I will be humble; for He says, "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." This is my holy purpose. Do Thou give me strength to perform it.

Whenever I behold the behavior of the children of this world, help me to remember the end to which they are going. Thy way, O world, is not directed toward Christ and eternal life. Help me, O Lord, always to inquire of myself, Is this the way that leads to heaven? Help me to bear in mind what I ought to be and who I am. I ought to be a child of God and a follower of Jesus; I ought to keep myself unspotted from the world. Help me to follow Jesus faithfully even unto death. Amen.

HYMN.

5, 5, 8, 8, 5, 5.

Jesus, still lead on,
Till our rest be won!
And although the way be cheerless,
We will follow calm and fearless.
Guide us by Thy hand
To our Fatherland.

If the way be drear,
If the foe be near,
Let not faithless fears o'ertake us,
Let not faith and hope forsake us;
For through many a foe
To our home we go!

When we seek relief
From a long-felt grief;
When temptations come alluring,
Make us patient and enduring:
Show us that bright shore
Where we weep no more.

Jesus still lead on,
Till our rest be won;
Heavenly Leader, still direct us,
Still support, console, protect us,
Till we safely stand
In our Fatherland.

—*Nicholas Louis, Count Zinzendorf. 1721.*
Jane Borthwick, Tr. 1853. a.

EVENING PRAYER ON THURSDAY.

I REMEMBER Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches. O loving and merciful God and Father! With thankful heart I come before Thee again in this evening hour, overwhelmed with benefits from Thy hand. O how merciful Thou hast been to me! Like as a father pitieth his children, so Thou hast pitied me, and permitted me to reach this evening unharmed. Thy long suffering has spared me, and Thou hast not punished me as I deserved. O pardon all the transgressions, secret or open, by which I have offended against Thee. I ought to be much stronger in fighting against sin, more zealous in good works, more fervent in prayer, more careful in speech, more holy in conduct. But who can understand his errors? Cleanse me also from secret faults. O let me in future avoid all those things by which I have grieved Thee to-day. Are my sins great? Still greater is Thy mercy. If Thou wert not a merciful God, who could live?

I now retire to rest. Do Thou, O God, shut me in, as Thou didst Noah in the ark, that no flood of adversity may overwhelm me. Let Thy holy angels guard me, that no visible or invisible foes may disturb my rest. Help me to remember,

that, as I lie down in bed, so I must one day lie in my grave, but that I shall rise again from the dead on the last day. Let me spend all my days in such a manner as to be sure of Thy grace, and to have a good conscience; so that I may always be ready, no matter at what time Thou mayest come to call me home.

As I lie in sleep and yet continue breathing, so do Thou, O Jesus, remain united with me even in my sleep. O Triune God! Guarded and shielded by Thee, no evil, not death itself, can harm me. Thy love and guardian care, O Father, Thy wounds, O Jesus, Thy help, O precious Holy Spirit, are my wall of defence, within which I slumber in peace and safety, and before which Satan must flee. Spread Thy protection over all my dear ones and over all the poor and wretched. Let me gather new strength in sleep; and, if it be Thy will, let me behold the light of day again on the morrow. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER ON FRIDAY.

MY heart is fixed, my heart is fixed: I will sing and give praise. O gracious and loving God, my Father, my Saviour, and my Sanctifier! In this morning hour I lift up my heart and hands to the throne of Thy Di-

vine Majesty, from which so many many mercies have streamed upon me during all my life, as well as during the past night. Thou hast been my Strength, my High Tower, my Deliverer, my Fortress, my Help, my Comfort, my Shield, yea, my All in All. Of all Thy benefits, my God and Lord, I acknowledge that I am unworthy. In the midst of the darkness Thou didst think of me, and while the dark shadows encompassed me, Thy Fatherly care kept me from harm and danger of body and soul. Therefore I praise Thee, and magnify Thy name. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad.

O gracious God, be with me this day, and lead me. Guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. Put into my heart the words I should speak, that I may not offend Thee with my lips. Teach me what I should do, that I may not be guilty of sinful deeds. Let the Holy Spirit admonish my heart whenever my thoughts would stray from Thee. O Jesus, when flesh and blood tempt me to sin, let me call before my mind Thy bleeding image, and remember how on a Friday Thou didst sweat great drops of blood for me in Gethsemane, how Thou wast scourged in the judgment-hall, and how, all bleeding and gory, Thou wast nailed to the cross

for me. Should my heart to-day be inclined to yield to any sin, then bring Thy bleeding image before me, that through it all desire to sin may be quenched and destroyed. Let me die unto sin, and walk in newness of life.

Remember also my bodily needs, and bless me. Let me regard all earthly things as transitory possessions, and not set my heart upon them, but seek the things which are eternal. When I labor, strengthen me; when I pray, hear me; when I go out, accompany me; and when I return home, depart not from me. Surround me and mine with Thy protection like the house of Job; guard me like Jacob; watch over me as over Elijah; and let me, beneath Thy sheltering care, reach the evening in peace. Let no sorrowful tidings reach my ears, but let joy and happiness be mine. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT.

MEDITATION ON FRIDAY.

Ps. 51: 10, 11. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

TO pray for the Holy Spirit is the best and most needful petition. The Holy Spirit is not one of those blessings which God bestows upon us without our prayer, like our daily bread, but is given only to those who pray for Him, as Christ says in Luke 11.

Accordingly, it is to be remembered (1) that the Holy Spirit is a gift which is bestowed only on those who desire to be holy and pure, and to be ruled by him. (2) It is highly necessary that we should pray for him; because in this life we need some one to lead us, teach us, and comfort us; and to do this is the office of the Holy Spirit. For He leads us into all truth, teaches us to know Christ, testifies of Him, and comforts us in every time of trouble and affliction, and in the hour of death. (3) Old and young, great and small should pray for the Holy Spirit. Parents should pray for Him for themselves and their children. He is the earnest of our inheritance. Whoever does not have the Holy Spirit

in his heart here in this world, shall not share in eternal salvation in the world to come. (4) Consequently, those are the most miserable of men, who do not have the Holy Spirit. They cannot become godly nor live holy lives, but constantly fall into sin, because they lack Him as their Ruler and Guide. And who shall comfort them on their death-bed in their last hour? (5) But if God has given us His Holy Spirit, we should not grieve nor turn Him away from us by wilful-sin and an ungodly life, but should daily pray: "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." (6) Such souls are truly united with God, and are in a state of grace and salvation.

PRAYER ON FRIDAY.

O mighty God and holy Father! Behold, I, Thy helpless child, come to Thee, and pray for the needful gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Thou hast promised to bestow Him upon all who ask Thee. I beseech Thee, therefore, send Him down from above, from Thy holy habitation, into my heart, that He may be my Guide and Counselor, and may enable me to do always what is pleasing to Thee.

O, there are so many ways of error and of sin; and there are so many persons who travel upon them, and who seek, either by persuasion or ridi-

cule, to make me follow their evil example! O God, lead me in Thy truth, and unite my heart to fear thy name. When the world and its sins appear attractive to me, help me to bear in mind that the broad road leadeth unto destruction. Bestow upon me Thy Holy Spirit: the Spirit of Truth, to teach me; the Spirit of consolation, to comfort me; the Spirit of joy, to gladden me; the Spirit of regeneration, to make of me a new creature; the Spirit of adoption, to assure me that I am Thy child; the Spirit who is the earnest of my heavenly inheritance.

O gracious Holy Spirit, sanctify me. Thou seest that my heart is full of impurity, evil, and sin, and that out of it proceed unholy thoughts and words and deeds. But thou also seest that by Thy grace I hate these things. O, I am sorry that I have ever grieved Thee, or despised Thy voice. I now yield myself entirely to Thy guidance and rule. Thou shalt be the life of my soul, the strength of my life, the consolation of my heart, the light of my understanding, the repose and strength of my will, the treasure of my memory, — the source and beginning as well as the end of my new spiritual life. O sanctify me wholly, that my spirit, soul, and body may be preserved blameless till the day of Jesus Christ. Make my heart Thy temple, and dwell therein. Make my members instruments of righteousness,

and let me not deliberately and wilfully sin. Make my heart a living sacrifice, acceptable unto God.

O Thou sacred Fire, burn within my heart, and consume all fleshly lusts and desires; so that I may devote all the powers of my body also to Thy glory. Rule over me, and lead me always in the right way, till at last Thou shalt bring me to heaven. And if, in view of the sufferings of this present time, my own flesh and blood or the world should seek to deprive me of the consolation that I am a child of God, do Thou assure me that neither death nor life shall separate me from the love of God, and that, while the children of God must bear the cross and endure affliction, they are none the less on that account His children. Dwell and rule in my heart always. Bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. And in the hour of death, when all human help and support fail, comfort me with the blessed assurance, that I shall share in the glory which Jesus has acquired for me by His sufferings and death. Amen.

HYMN.

S. 7. 7. 7.

Come, O come, Thou quickening Spirit,
Thou for ever art divine:
Let Thy power never fail me,
Always fill this heart of mine;

Thus shall grace and truth and light
Dissipate the gloom of night.

Grant my mind and my affections
Wisdom, counsel, purity;
That I may be ever seeking
Naught but that which pleases Thee.
Let Thy knowledge spread and grow,
Working error's overthrow.

Lead me to green pastures, lead me
By the true and living way.
Shield me from each strong temptation
That might draw my heart astray;
And if e'er my feet should turn,
For each error let me mourn.

Holy Spirit, strong and mighty,
Thou who makest all things new,
Make Thy work within me perfect,
Help me by Thy Word so true,
Arm me with that sword of Thine,
And the victory shall be mine.

In the faith, O, make me steadfast;
Let not Satan, death or shame
Of my confidence deprive me;
Lord, my refuge is Thy name.
When the flesh inclines to ill,
Let Thy Word prove stronger still.

And when my last hour approaches,
Let my hopes grow yet more bright,
(Since I am an heir of heaven,)
In Thy glorious courts of light,

Fairer far than voice can tell,
There, redeemed by Christ, to dwell.

— *Henry Held, d. 1659.*

— *Chas. Wm. Schaeffer, Tr. 1866. a.*

EVENING PRAYER ON FRIDAY.

THE angel of the Lord encampeth round
about them that fear Him, and delivereth
them. O great and mighty God! Let
Thy holy angels encamp round about me this
night, and enclose me with their powerful pro-
tection. As Thou didst command them to guard
me during the day and keep me in all my ways,
so do Thou also let them stand around my couch
at night, like Solomon's mighty men.

I lie down to rest, my Jesus. O, do Thou
paint the door-posts of my heart with Thy
precious blood, that no harm may befall me!
If Thou art with me, I fear no evil. Thou hast
been with me to-day whithersoever I have gone;
Thou hast added Thy blessing to my labors;
Thou hast prospered everything which I began
in Thy name. O that my constant motto had been
the words of Joseph, "How then can I do this
great wickedness, and sin against God?" O, in
mercy forgive me all the evil which I have done
and spoken and thought to-day. With the pass-

ing of the day, let my sin and guilt be taken away, and remembered no more forever. If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? How should man be just with God? If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand.

But the debt which I cannot pay myself, I will pay with Jesus' blood. Jesus is mine, His blood is mine, His righteousness is mine, His heaven is mine. Therefore "receive me, my Redeemer; my Shepherd, make me Thine! Of every good the Fountain, Thou art the Spring of mine." Let Thy goodness lead me to repentance; for Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness hast Thou drawn me. And since Thou hast been so kind and good to me, let Thy bleeding love warm my cold heart, that I may never more intentionally offend Thee.

I retire to rest; and I know not, but that this night may be my last. I know, indeed, how I lie down to sleep, but I do not know how I shall arise. That rests with Thee, Thou Lord of my life. But this I know full well: that if I fall asleep in Thy name, O Father, in Thy wounds, O Jesus, in Thy fellowship, O Holy Spirit, I shall sleep a blessed sleep, even though I should not rise again to this earthly life. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER ON SATURDAY.

LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. These, O great and almighty God, are the thoughts that fill my soul, now that Thou hast permitted me, on this last day of the week, to arise from my bed in health. I laud Thee in this morning hour, because Thou hast so gloriously protected and defended me in body and soul, that no danger or suffering could disturb me. O my God! As little as the stars in the firmament, the sand on the sea-shore, or the drops in the ocean can be counted, so little can the blessings be enumerated which Thou hast bestowed on me during all my life, as well as during this past week.

Thou hast been with me during the night, and hast warded off every calamity. Thou saidst: "My child, sleep thou in peace; for Satan shall not harm thee; sleep safe till morning dawns, let not his rage alarm thee." And now, shielded by Thee, I behold again the light of day. O let me this day deny all ungodliness and wicked works, and live righteously, soberly, and godly. As I put on my clothes, so let me also put on mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering; and put off the old man

with his works, unrighteousness, hypocrisy, lying, anger, strife, contention, impurity, and malice. Consecrate my heart as Thy temple, that to-day I may say and do nothing that is displeasing to Thee.

My Jesus, who art the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending: I have, by Thy grace, reached the end of another week. Let me remember that sometime the last week and the last day of my life will come; and let me begin, continue, and end every week in such a way as will, in the last hours of my life, give me no cause to be ashamed or to wish that I had never been born. Let me spend this day in Thy fear. Guard me in all my ways; bless my labors; and regulate all my plans and purposes by Thy will. Blot out with Thy precious blood the account which I have heaped up against myself this week by my sins. And let me during the coming week be more circumspect, more godly, more upright, and more pleasing to Thee. I already rejoice at the thought of the Sunday which dawns on the morrow, when I shall rest from my daily labor, in order that Thou mayest do in me Thy work of edification, sanctification, and conversion. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD AT THE END OF THE WEEK.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 116: 12. What shall I render unto the Lord
for all His benefits toward me?

THE days and weeks of our life pass away one by one; and with each day and week we approach nearer to the grave. But meanwhile, as the days roll on, God in mercy loads us with benefits in body and soul, filling our hearts with food and gladness. The Christian should call these benefits to mind at the end of the week.

He should (1), thank God for the blessings which he has received, for the divine protection which he has enjoyed throughout the week, and for the divine help which he has obtained in answer to his prayers. If he hears that others have suffered affliction and sorrow, or have fallen, or have met with harm, or have failed to be relieved of sorrow and grief, he should pity them, and at the same time he should thank God for the mercy which has spared him. He should bear (2) in mind that this goodness of God is meant to lead him to repentance. He should, therefore, on the last day of the week, repent of all the evil which he has done on each

day, and should let it be his day of reconciliation, of prayer, of repentance, and of thanksgiving. He should also (3) pray for God's continued protection, goodness, and mercy during the coming week, and should commend himself to God's grace. He should (4) remember that one week after another will pass away, till the week of his death arrives. And he should prepare himself for that time by true faith in Christ and a life of daily repentance.

Such sacred meditations should make the Christian devout, careful, thankful, and godly. They should cause him to trust in God as the source of every good gift; to commend himself to God's grace; to remain in the love of Jesus; and thus to be enabled to live according to God's will, and, when the hour of his death approaches, to die in peace.

PRAYER ON SATURDAY.

The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Hitherto hath the Lord helped me. Thus do I speak, my God and Lord, now that I have reached the end of this week in safety. How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. Thou shieldest, keepest, and preservest them; and Thy

mercies are new unto them every morning. O my God, Thou hast spread Thy wings over me during the past week. Thou hast preserved me in health, and hast blessed and kept and guarded me. Thou hast been very merciful to me in body and soul, and hast permitted my dear ones also to enjoy Thy protection and grace. It is the Lord's doing! It is He who has brought me safely through this week. Therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

O how many have fallen during the past week, while I am still here, supported by Thy grace. How many have found it a week of sorrow and crosses, while I have been permitted to spend it in peace and quietness. How many have suffered misery and anguish, while I have remained unharmed under Thy protection. I therefore praise and exalt Thee from my inmost soul. I thank Thee for Thy protection and mercy; I thank Thee for Thy love and strengthening grace; I thank Thee for all the benefits which Thou hast bestowed upon me in body and soul.

O my God, mercifully forgive me all the evil which I have done this week. I am sorry for my sins, I repent, I am in distress on account of them; and I beseech Thee to have mercy upon me, and to forgive all my transgressions. For

the sake of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, pardon me, and deal not with me as I have deserved. With the help of Thy Holy Spirit, I will strive to shun during the coming week my former sins, and to serve thee during all my life in holiness and righteousness. Amen.

HYMN.

6, 7. D.

Now thank we all our God,
 With heart and hands and voices,
 Who wondrous things hath done,
 In whom this earth rejoices;
 Who from our mother's arms
 Hath blessed us on our way
 With countless gifts of love,
 And still is ours to-day.

O may this bounteous God
 Through all our life be near us,
 With ever joyful hearts
 And blessed peace to cheer us;
 And keep us in His grace,
 And guide us when perplexed,
 And free us from all ills,
 In this world and the next.

All praise and thanks to God
 The Father now be given,
 The Son, and Him who reigns
 With them in highest heaven;
 The One eternal God,
 Whom heaven and earth adore;

For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

— *Martin Rinkart, 1644.*

Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1858. a.

EVENING PRAYER ON SATURDAY.

WHEN I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me. O loving and gracious God! The day draws to a close, and with it the week; but Thy mercy endureth forever. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but Thy kindness shall not depart from Thy children. O God, Thy kindness has permitted me to live through another week. What I did not know at the beginning of the week, I know now: that I should be permitted to reach its end in safety. Manifold have been Thy mercies to me during the past week: Thou hast heard my prayers, preserved me, counseled me, and guarded me. Not a day passed by in which I did not receive tokens of Thy love and grace; not an hour elapsed in which Thou didst not pour out streams of mercy upon me. What I wished at the beginning of the week has now come to pass. O what grace and love and mercy are Thine!

But to-day, at the end of this week, I also think of my sins. Many have been my trans-

gressions in thought and wish and desire, by commission and omission. I have not cared for my soul as faithfully as I should, nor devoted to Thee as many hours as I ought. O Lord, Lord, forgive me all my sins. O Lord Jesus, blot out with Thy precious blood this week's entire account of sin, and let it remain forgiven and forgotten forever. O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure. Be Thou a pillar of fire around me to-night. Let no harm or misfortune or peril touch me or mine. Help me to cast all my care upon Thee, and, with the assurance that Thou carest for me, let me sleep in peace.

I have now become a week older, and have advanced one step nearer to eternity. The end of this week reminds me of the end of my life. The last week, the last day, and the last hour of my life will come, and then the long eternity! O help me so to spend each future week and day and hour, that I need not tremble before Thy face. Help me daily to set my heart on those things which I desire to possess eternally. I am but a stranger and a sojourner here on earth; my home and my eternal mansions are in heaven, where Thou wilt wipe away all tears from the eyes of Thy children, bestow upon them the good things of Thy house, and fill them with eternal joy.

I now lay aside my earthly business and occupation, and prepare myself for the approaching Sunday, which I purpose to spend in prayer, singing, and meditation upon Thy holy Word. Grant me the grace of Thy Holy Spirit, and let not my devotions be disturbed either by my fellow-men or by my own heart. Amen.

BOOK I.

PART II.

FOR THE FESTIVALS OF THE CHURCH.

THE CHRISTIAN CONTEMPLATES THE
ADVENT OF JESUS IN THE FLESH.

MORNING PRAYER.

ENRAPTURED by the thought of Thy blessed coming in the flesh, I leave my couch, and lift up my hands to Thee, Thou only begotten Son of God, from whom cometh all my help. Thou comest not only to rescue and save the world, but comest for my berefit, in order that I too may live and find my sufficiency in Thee. Why then should I not rejoice? Why should I not be glad?

O Jesus, since Thou appearest on earth in the form of sinful flesh for my sake, enter into my heart and sanctify it wholly. Prepare it for Thyself, and make it Thy habitation. Strengthen my faith, and fill me with Thy love, that I may prefer Thee to the lusts and pleasures of the world. And should the world and its sins — pride, arro-



CHRIST THE GOOD SHEPHERD.



gance, anger, boastfulness, or other fleshly works — come to me, and say, “In this heart we will dwell, here we will reign, here we will establish ourselves”; then let me by Thy grace resist them, and say, “Depart from me, ye sins; go back thou world: this is the temple of the Lord. Away! Away! I have no room for you; ye cannot dwell here. My Jesus is with me; I have yielded myself entirely to Him: He shall rule over me; His I will remain in time and eternity.” O how happy I shall be, if Thou wilt abide with me, and enable me to overcome the world and every enemy of my soul!

O my Saviour, Thou didst come into the world to save sinners: have mercy, therefore, on me also, and enter into my heart. Thou didst, indeed, long ago, even before I was born, choose my soul for Thy habitation; and Thou didst prepare it for this purpose in Holy Baptism, cleansing me with Thy precious blood from the guilt of my sinful state. But, alas, I have wandered from Thee; I have defiled myself by wilful sin; I have driven Thee from me by my evil ways. Now, however, I come to Thee again; I open to Thee the door of my heart; I long earnestly for Thee. As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee. O my God and Saviour, have

mercy upon me, and abide with me. I vow to Thee eternal fidelity. Unite me with Thee so firmly, that nothing shall henceforth separate me from Thee. Let Thy Holy Spirit permeate my spirit, and lead me in all my ways. Let me ever follow and cling to Thee, and through Thee obtain eternal salvation. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR ADVENT.

Zech. 9: 9. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto Thee: He is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

If there is a time which godly souls love to spend in devotion, it is certainly the time of the holy festivals, on which the Church celebrates the mercies of God. While it is true, that the majority of so-called Christians spend the holy festivals of the Church in amusement and pleasure, in pride and vanity, in idleness and foolish talking, and consequently take the love and grace of the Highest very little to heart, and fail to be built up in their religion; the believing child of God is of a different spirit. (1) He rejoices at the prospect of the approaching festivals, because they help him to bring to mind all God's goodness to him. (2) In the holy season of Advent, he meditates upon the love of his heavenly Father, who spared

not His only Son, but sent Him into the world to suffer and die, and thus to acquire salvation for men. (3) He meditates upon the fervent love of Jesus, who clothed Himself with our flesh and blood in order to redeem us and bring us to heaven. (4) He praises the grace of the Holy Spirit, who brings these mercies of God before the souls of the believers as vividly as if they had taken place before their very eyes. (5) Thus he employs the holy festival season as a time of devotion and prayer, which he begins and ends in hearing and meditating upon God's holy Word, in singing festival hymns, and in quiet, godly living.

PRAYER FOR ADVENT.

O merciful Jesus, who didst come to seek and to save the lost! I thank Thee that Thy grace has permitted me once more to celebrate this holy season. And I beseech Thee to strengthen me by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may spend it in Thy fear and in holy meditation, to the edifying of my soul.

Thou everlasting Son of God, who wast before the foundations of the earth were laid! Thou didst take upon Thee human flesh and become true man, in order that Thou mightest bring us joy and salvation. On account of the fall into sin, we were unable to come to Thee

in heaven; therefore Thou camest to us on earth, that Thou mightest lead us all into life eternal. Through sin we had become strangers and captives, yea, the enemies of God; but through Thy holy coming the damage wrought by sin is to be repaired. O boundless grace! O unspeakable mercy! For Thy sake, O Jesus, the strangers are to be made friends, the captives to be released, the enemies of God to become His beloved. Sinners are to be made children of God, and the fallen are to be lifted up! O blessed Advent, through which we who were condemned to death shall have life, and we who had fallen from Thy favor shall be clothed with glory and honor! For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.

Dearest Jesus! Save me, and lead me into Thy kingdom. Give me, in this holy season, an obedient spirit. Let me gladly and devoutly listen to Thy holy Word, and receive and keep it in my heart. Let me, in these holy days, grow in faith, in knowledge, and in love, and show forth in my life the fruits of faith,—chastity, humility, meekness, obedience, godliness. Let Thy Advent be for me a blessed and salutary Advent. Let it not be said of me, He

came unto His own, and His own received Him not.

O Lord Jesus! I receive Thee in faith; I love Thee; I honor Thee; I follow Thee. Enter in, Thou Blessed of the Lord! Why standest Thou without? By Thy grace I have prepared my heart for thee. Enter into it: I will grasp Thee by faith as my only Redeemer and Saviour, and appropriate Thy merit and righteousness as my own. Come into my heart: for love of Thee I will gladly avoid all worldly vanities, pleasures, and sins, in order that Thou alone mayest live and reign within me. O dwell in my soul, sanctify me, keep me in Thy grace. I repent of my sins, and seek mercy in Thee. Therefore my sins shall no more condemn me. If the Son shall make me free, I shall be free indeed. If God be for me, who can be against me?

O Jesus, Thou camest as a King: reign henceforth within my heart, that sin may no more have dominion over me. Thou camest as the Righteous One: make me righteous, and bestow upon me the robe of Thy righteousness. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. Thou camest

poor, that Thou mightest make me spiritually rich, — rich in faith, and rich in heavenly treasures. Thou camest humble: O make me humble; let me learn humility and meekness from Thee, and exercise these virtues on every occasion. O Thou King of Glory, enter through the doors of my heart! Behold, by Thy grace, I open them wide for Thee. Rule me henceforth by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may remain Thy abode and temple even to my happy end. Amen.

HYMN.

7, 6. D.

Hail to the Lord's Anointed,
 Great David's greater Son!
 Hail, in the time appointed,
 His reign on earth begun!
 He comes to break oppression,
 To set the captive free;
 To take away transgression,
 And rule in equity.

He comes with succor speedy
 To those who suffer wrong;
 To help the poor and needy,
 And bid the weak be strong;
 To give them songs for sighing,
 Their darkness turn to light,
 Whose souls, condemned and dying,
 Were precious in His sight.

He shall come down like showers
 Upon the fruitful earth;

And love, joy, hope, like flowers,
Spring in His path to birth.
Before Him on the mountains
Shall peace, the herald, go;
And righteousness, in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.

To Him shall prayer unceasing
And daily vows ascend;
His kingdom still increasing,
A kingdom without end.
The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove;
His name shall stand forever;
That name to us is Love.

—*James Montgomery, 1821.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR ADVENT.

O Lord, how boundless is Thy love to men! My soul is filled with wonder and rapture at its contemplation. Thou hast not only bestowed innumerable temporal benefits upon me and all mankind, but hast delivered up Thine only-begotten Son for all the lost children of Adam, and consequently for me also. What an unexampled proof of Thy love Thou hast given! For my sake, Thou hast sent Thine only Son to become man; that, being found in fashion as a man, He might suffer torture, scourging, stripes, and even death itself, and thus, by rendering satisfaction to Thy offended justice, might redeem, justify, and save me!

If an earthly personage of exalted rank should give his choicest ring, his most valuable jewels, his most precious treasure, in order to rescue some wretched man from misery, his action would be lauded as a remarkable manifestation of love for a fellow-man. If a king should deliver one of his sons into captivity in order thereby to release one of lesser rank from chains and fetters, the love of the monarch for his subject could not be sufficiently extolled. And yet all this would be as nothing, compared with the love which Thou hast displayed toward the children of men in sending Thy beloved Son in the fulness of time, to take upon Himself flesh and blood, and to appear as man in the world.

A man who has been freed from misery may be able afterwards to do many favors for his benefactor, and in this way, to some extent at least, recompense him for his kindness. A subject who, through the goodness of his king, has been delivered from galling fetters, may afterwards be useful to his monarch, and thus in some measure assuage the king's grief for the loss of his son. But I and my brethren according to the flesh can never recompense Thee for what Thou hast done for us. We possess nothing which we can give Thee. We are unable to repay Thee in any way for our rescue through Christ from the destruction in which

we languished by nature, and from the bondage of death in which we were held. Thy love is beyond measure; it transcends all human comprehension. Nothing remains for us but humble gratitude; nothing but the heartfelt thanks and praise which we bring as the tribute of our hearts, touched by Thy grace.

Therefore, blessed be Thy name for the boundless love which Thou hast revealed toward me in sending Thine only Son into the world. O let Thy love inspire me to love Thee in return with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength. Give me grace to live in obedience to Thy will, and to cling to Thee. Turn my heart away from the world, from vanity and sin; and kindle in me the flame of divine love, that I may always enjoy Thy favor, and be able to stand in Thy sight. Let me grow in Thy love and knowledge, remain steadfast in the faith, and so serve Thee in the Spirit, that I may taste in my heart the sweetness of Thy grace, and always thirst after Thee. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATES AT CHRIST-
MAS UPON THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

MORNING PRAYER.

IN Thee, my God and Saviour, my heart rejoices, as I now awake from sleep, and think of Thy holy conception and birth. Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh. My weak and finite mind cannot, indeed, comprehend or explain the Incarnation; but my soul is enraptured by its contemplation. And although my reason must bow in awe before the impenetrable veil which shrouds this mystery—a veil which shall be removed only in eternity,—Thy Word, which is the truth and cannot lie, not only assures me that the incarnation actually took place, but even indicates not unclearly the manner in which it occurred. It describes Thy conception and birth beautifully in the words of the angel to Mary: “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.”

In this description I find ample cause for joy; and when I contemplate it, I am filled with delight. For I picture to myself how the Holy Spirit, as the all-wise and all-powerful Architect, came to Mary; cleansed from all sin the

building which Thy divinity was to occupy; and filled it with His most holy gifts. I picture to myself how Thou, the power of the Highest, whose name is called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, didst occupy this holy building, unite it with Thy divinity, and impart to the human nature which Thou didst assume all Thy divine attributes and prerogatives. I picture to myself how Thou, by becoming a child and partaking of our flesh and blood, hast sanctified our human nature, and made us acceptable to Thy heavenly Father. What streams of blessedness must not descend upon me, if, when I awake, I ponder over these things in holy contemplation!

O my Jesus, who by Thy incarnation hast become my Brother! how rich, how blessed Thou dost make me! In Thee I now possess all things. With Thee I can secure all things. With Thee I can undertake and do all things. I will not now despair, no matter what tribulations may come upon me; but will turn to Thee, and confidently say: Jesus, my Brother, help me. No distress or sorrow shall cause me to lose courage. I will cling firmly to Thee, because Thou art my Brother, and because, as such, Thou lovest me, and wilt certainly have mercy upon me.

In Thy incarnation, O Jesus, Thou didst take upon Thee my nature, and thereby unite Thyself with me. Make me also partaker of Thy divine nature, that I may lead a godly life, and may surrender myself entirely to the power and guidance of Thy Holy Spirit. Let the high relationship in which I stand to Thee keep me from sin and from fellowship with the world, that I may do nothing which will offend Thee. Let me value Thy friendship higher than anything that is upon the earth. Let me serve Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. And since to love Thee is better than all else, let me love Thee ever, and thus remain in Thy fellowship in life and in death, in time and in eternity. O my Brother, my Elect! What joy shall not be mine when, in everlasting blessedness, I behold Thee, whom even here on earth I have loved, clothed in Thy glory and majesty, and am united with Thee forever! I rejoice in spirit at the prospect; my heart is filled with joy. And why should I not rejoice, when, in hope, I am already saved and in heaven with Jesus my Brother? Amen.

MEDITATION FOR CHRISTMAS.

Gal. 4: 4, 5. But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

If the birth of a prince of the royal house brings joy to a whole kingdom, the birth of Jesus Christ is a far greater reason still why all men should rejoice. The angels of heaven rejoice, and announce glad tidings to men. Why then should not the children of men be glad? They should rejoice (1) over the love of God, which spared not His only Son, but delivered Him up for us all. They should (2) rejoice over the loving-kindness of Jesus, who, though He is God and the Son of God, did not refuse to take upon himself our human nature in the Virgin Mary, and to become a little Child.

Believers (3) marvel in secret at the wonderful plan of God for our salvation,—a plan which neither man nor angel would ever have devised,—that the Son of God should suffer in men's place, and reconcile them to God. They marvel (4) at the unmerited grace which God offers to men, who are by nature His enemies (Rom. 5:10), and who did not ask for His grace, however much they needed it. Therefore, (5) when the counsel of God with respect to our salvation has been made known to them, believers thank Him

all the more fervently, accept His plan of grace, and follow Jesus in faith and holiness. For this reason, also, the holy Christmas days are for the believers days of prayer, rejoicing, and thanksgiving.

PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS.

This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it. Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity. Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Arise, my soul! employ this festival for the glory of God and thine own edification, and say: O Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, would that every drop of my blood were a tongue to praise Thy love and grace and mercy!

God is love! This my heart and mind acknowledge on this holy festival. Thy love has found a way, of which no angel nor man would ever have thought, to bring men to salvation. The second Person of the Godhead became man in order to sanctify and cleanse human nature! O Blessed Jesus! Everlasting praise and thanks be unto Thee for Thy Incarnation and Nativity. Thou becamest a Child of man, that we might become children of God. Our human nature is now truly exalted; for Thou hast united it with Thy divinity, and hast introduced it into the

counsels of the Holy Trinity. O Love! O Grace! As certainly as the human nature is united with the divine in Thee, so certainly is there established between God and men an eternal friendship, an eternal reconciliation, an eternal peace, an eternal love. When God beholds us in His Son, He cannot behold us otherwise than with favor; for He who spared not His only begotten Son, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things,—the forgiveness of sins, righteousness, peace, life and salvation?

O the depth of the love of Jesus, who was willing to be born as a tender Infant, that He might sanctify our sinful birth! who increased in wisdom and stature, that He might sanctify our youth! “All hail, Thou noble Guest, this morn, whose love did not the sinner scorn! In my distress Thou comest to me. What thanks shall I return to Thee?” O tenderest Friend of souls! my Brother! In Thee I have a Helper in sorrow, a Deliverer in trouble, a Saviour when my sins terrify me, a Stay in need, a Support in death. Thou art the light that lightens me, the Way that leads me to the Father, the Truth that teaches me, the Life that gives me life. Thou art my Righteousness, who justifiest and savest me; my Highpriest, who intercedest for me, and blessest me; the Lamb of the Sacrifice for my sins, the full ransom for my transgressions.

O blessed Holy Spirit! How great is Thy love in permitting this comfort, this joy, this salvation to be again proclaimed to me! I rejoice from the heart on this holy festival, and say: My Jesus is mine; His heaven is mine. The Child that is born is for me, for me; the Son that is given is for me, for me. He has acquired and bestows upon me the grace of God, divine sonship, and an eternal inheritance! O Jesus, whom I in spirit behold and gaze upon in the manger, how lovely, how kind art Thou! O grant me grace, that I may never forget Thee, but keep Thee ever in my heart, on my lips, and before my eyes. O my Salvation! sanctify me; I yield myself to Thee with all that I have and am. O my Bridegroom, embrace me. For Thee I will live, Thee I will serve, and out of love for Thee I will renounce the world and its pleasures. Let my heart be Thy manger-bed. Dwell in it in time and eternity. Fold and keep me in Thy love, that I may find rest, peace, comfort, safety, and salvation in Thee. I am now no longer lost; for Jesus has become man. Believing on Him I shall not perish, but have everlasting life. God is my Friend, because I am in Christ by faith, and Jesus lives in me. I fear not death; for in death I have life. I fear not the accusations of conscience on account of my sins; for Jesus intercedes for me. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

Good news from heaven the angels bring,
Glad tidings to the earth they sing:
To us this day a Child is given,
To crown us with the joy of heaven.

This is the Christ, our God and Lord,
Who in all need shall aid afford;
He will Himself our Saviour be,
From all our sins to set us free.

To us that blessedness He brings
Which from His Father's bounty springs:
That in the heavenly realms we may
With Him enjoy eternal day.

All hail, Thou noble Guest, this morn,
Whose love did not the sinner scorn:
In my distress Thou comest to me;
What thanks shall I return to Thee?

Were earth a thousand times as fair,
Beset with gold and jewels rare,
She yet were far too poor to be
A narrow cradle, Lord, for Thee.

Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefiled,
Within my heart, that it may be
A quiet chamber kept for Thee.

Praise God upon His heavenly throne,
Who gave to us His only Son:
For this His hosts, on joyful wing,
A blest New Year of mercy sing.

Martin Luther, 1535.

From Arthur T. Russell, Tr. 1848.

And Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1855.

EVENING PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS.

My Jesus, my Immanuel, my King, my Relation, my Friend! In spirit I still lie prostrate before Thy manger, and ponder Thy Incarnation. And how can I better close this day which the Lord has made, or better prepare myself for a sweet and refreshing sleep, than by such meditations? I acknowledge Thee, O incarnate Saviour, as the true Messiah, as the Redeemer of the world sprung from David's line, in whom all things that the prophets have spoken are fulfilled. Thou wast born at the time, at the place, of the family, and of the mother, which Thy heavenly Father in the days of the Old Testament covenant had appointed, indicated, and made known. Why then should I not acknowledge Thee as the true Saviour, and heartily rejoice over Thy manifestation in the flesh? What the company of the Patriarchs wished and longed for and foretold, has been gloriously fulfilled.

When I think of these things, and reflect upon the boundless blessings which through them have become mine, my heart leaps for joy. Thou art the high and exalted God, who wast before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the sea were formed, and who shalt remain when all these shall have fallen into ruin. Thou art the eternal Jehovah, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the Ending, who art, and who wast, and who art to come, the Almighty. And yet Thou dost not despise the human race, but for its sake dost become the humblest and most despised. O the depth of such love and grace! How blessed is my lot, to behold such a Redeemer lying in a manger! Let me not go away without an awakening of my soul, but let all that I have learned from the contemplation of Thy birth help to sanctify me and strengthen my faith. Thou wast born in the night: grant that I may flee the darkness of sin, and ever walk in Thy light as in the day. Thou camest to earth when stillness and repose reigned over all: may I obtain true repose of heart in Thee. Let me avoid the turmoil of the world, that Thou mayest find an abode in me. O my Immanuel, seeking Thee in spirit, I find Thee in an inn: grant me grace to regard the world as an inn, where I shall tarry for a brief period only. Let me in good time direct my thoughts to that home

where I desire to dwell forever, and labor to enter into Thy rest. Thou wast born in a stable, an inconvenient place: grant that I may cheerfully endure all hardships, and be content with my lot in this world, just as Thy goodness may see fit to order it. Thou didst lie in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes: wrap Thyself in my heart, and let it be Thine abode.

How blessed I shall be, if Thou wilt in mercy fulfil all these my desires! I doubt not that Thou hearest me. I believe confidently that Thou wilt satisfy my longings. Calmly and peacefully, therefore, I now retire to rest and sleep within Thy sheltering arms, and say: O tender Infant, enter in, And dwell with me for aye; Strengthen within me faith and love; Lord, hear me, as I pray. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS AND GIVES
THANKS AT THE CLOSE OF THE
YEAR.

MORNING PRAYER.

O LORD, my God, the Father of all mercies!
As I now open my eyes, I behold the light
of day for the last time in a year in which
I have most clearly experienced, that Thou art
gracious and full of compassion, longsuffering,

and plenteous in goodness and truth. Not a day, yea, not an hour of the vanishing year has passed away, in which Thou has not manifested one or all of these attributes toward me.

Thou hast been gracious to me. For without any merit or worthiness on my part, Thou hast showered Thy benefits upon me. Thou hast supplied me with food and drink, nourished me, and granted me every needful gift. Whenever I have called upon Thee, Thou hast forgiven me all my sins and transgressions for Jesus' sake. Thou hast graciously taken away all the punishment which I deserved by my wickedness, trespasses, and sins, and hast not rewarded me according to my iniquities, but hast, instead, poured out salvation and blessing upon me.

Thou hast also been full of compassion, as well as gracious, toward me. No need or distress or trouble came upon me, but Thy Father-heart melted in pity and compassion. When the need was greatest, Thy help was nearest. Scarcely had sorrow visited me, when Thou begankest to turn my sorrow into joy. Scarcely did I cry unto Thee, when Thou heardest me. Yea, often before I cried, Thou didst send relief.

And O, merciful God, with what longsuffering and patience Thou hast borne with me this year! When I fell through weakness, Thou didst forbear. When I erred in my haste, Thou forgavest

my debt of sin. When I strayed from Thee but returned in true repentance, Thou didst receive me again. What a wealth of patience and long-suffering Thou hast revealed toward me!

Even so hast Thou shown by Thy dealings with me that Thou art plenteous in goodness. Thou hast spared my life and preserved me in health, so that I, more than many others, have reason to praise and magnify Thy love, and to say, Thou hast done all things well.

And behind all Thy dealings with me is Thy truth. Thou fulfillest all the promises which Thou hast made, and all Thy works are done in truth. In Thy faithfulness Thou hast showered so many mercies upon me, that I cannot enumerate them all. What shall I render to Thee, O Lord, for all Thy benefits to me? I cannot repay Thee. Therefore mercifully accept my imperfect stammerings as a thank-offering. Thanks be to Thee for all Thy truth, for all Thy goodness, for all Thy longsuffering, for all Thy compassion, for all Thy grace. Deal with me in the future as Thou hast dealt with me in the past. Let me spend this day in Thy fear, that to-day, as well as through all eternity, I may praise and magnify Thy name. Amen.

MEDITATION AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

Ps. 103: 1, 2. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.

If devout and thankful souls rejoice when God has permitted them to pass a week in safety, why should they not much more rejoice when under God's protection they have lived through a whole year? How much suffering may come upon us in a single day! How much more in a whole year! Consequently, when a devout Christian beholds the end of the year, he lifts his hands and heart and voice to heaven, and closes the year with praise, thanksgiving, and prayer.

Nor is he satisfied simply to give expression to such customary phrases as, "God be praised and thanked: the year is passed." On the contrary, (1) he gives thanks that during the past year God has caused His Holy Word to be preached for the edification of his soul; and that through the Holy Supper God has given him strength to lead a godly life, and to bring forth the fruits of faith. (2) He asks himself, whether during the year that is past he has become a better man; whether he has grown stronger in spirit at the same time that he has grown a year older. (3) He prays God heartily and fervently for the forgiveness of the sins which he has wittingly or

unwittingly committed. (4) He thanks God for the many bodily benefits which he has received : that God has sustained, provided for, defended, delivered, preserved, blessed, guarded, and guided him. (5) If God have sent him sickness, sorrow, and trouble, and freed him again from them, he should give special thanks for this. Indeed, he should, at the end of the year, recall as much as possible all the blessings which came to him and his during each week or each month, in order that the last days of the year may be for him days of praise, prayer, thanksgiving, and repentance. (6) He should pray for God's grace upon him during the new year.

PRAYER AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me? The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. O Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! My soul rejoices in Thy grace, which has permitted me to live through another year under Thy protection. How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God : therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house ; and Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasures. For with Thee is the fountain of life : in Thy light shall we see light.

My God, the days in a year are many, but Thy benefits are more. The hours and minutes of the year can be counted; but the mercies which Thou hast bestowed upon me are innumerable. I thank Thee, that during this year Thou hast caused Thy Word to be preached to me in its truth and purity, and through it hast shown to me the way of life and salvation. O seal in my heart all that I have heard; and grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that I may regulate my life according to Thy Word. I thank Thee, that Thou hast frequently given me Thy body to eat and Thy blood to drink in the Holy Supper: grant that it may strengthen my faith and sanctify my life. I thank Thee, that Thou hast frequently forgiven my sins and turned away from me the punishment which I deserved. O grant me strength sedulously to avoid those sins in the new year, and never again wilfully to commit them. I thank Thee, that Thou hast blessed my occupation in life, provided me with food and raiment, granted me health, turned away harm, lightened my cross, and pitied me in distress. Thou hast guarded me as the apple of Thine eye, and defended me against the foes which sought my soul's destruction. Thou hast heard me in the hour of need, and hast let my prayer come before Thy throne. In my distress Thou hast sent me help from the sanctuary and strengthened

me out of Zion. Thou hast poured out Thy blessing upon me. Thou hast not hid Thy face from me when I cried unto Thee. Thou, O loving Father, hast led me, Thy child, by the hand. Thou, O mighty King, hast shielded me, Thy subject, against my foes. Thou, O faithful Shepherd, hast made me, Thy sheep, to lie down in green pastures. Thou hast preserved my soul alive, while others perished. Thy goodness and faithfulness have been with me from the beginning to the end of the year. Thy wisdom has led me; Thy love has guarded me; Thy help has gladdened me; Thy grace has preserved me; Thy omnipotence has ever upheld me; Thy tender Father-hand has given me all things that I needed; Thine all-seeing eye has kept watch over me, guarded my going out and my coming in, and warded off all harm. Therefore, O taste and see that the Lord is good! Behold how kind He has been to my soul!

If at times Thou didst permit me to experience great distress, Thou didst also deliver me again. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delighted my soul. If danger and need frequently came near me, Thy help was also near. Thy angel kept me in all my ways, and delivered me from the jaws of the lion.

O my God! Mercifully forgive me all the sins which I have committed against Thee in the old

year. I beseech Thee, do not in the new year punish me on account of them, but pardon me for Jesus' sake. Lord, remember not the sins of my youth nor my transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

O Lord God, I now close the old year with thanksgiving and praise and prayer. Remain, I humbly beseech Thee, my Shield and gracious God in the new year also. Keep Thy guarding hand over me. Yea, let me be entrusted to Thy care and love and grace in all time to come. Amen.

HYMN.

7s

For Thy mercy and Thy grace,
Faithful through another year,
Hear our song of thankfulness;
Father and Redeemer, hear.

In our weakness and distress,
Rock of Strength! be Thou our Stay:
In the pathless wilderness
Be our true and living way.

Who of us death's awful road
In the coming year shall tread,
With Thy rod and staff, O God,
Comfort Thou his dying head.

Keep us faithful; keep us pure;
Keep us evermore Thine own:

Help, O help us to endure:
Fit us for the promised crown.

So within Thy palace gate
We shall praise, on golden strings,
Thee, the only Potentate,
Lord of lords, and King of kings.

—*Henry Downson, 1845.*

EVENING PRAYER AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

For the last time in the old year, O merciful God, I bow my knee before Thee, and seek naught but Thy grace and peace. I know that I have often grieved and angered Thee in the last twelve months. I know that I have often transgressed Thy commandments, and have seldom walked in the path in which I should have walked. I know that by my disobedience I have deserved Thy wrath and displeasure, and have merited Thy just punishment. But I also know that for Jesus' sake Thou dost receive penitent sinners into Thy favor, and dost forgive them their transgressions and sins. Therefore I now cast myself before Thy throne of grace, and beseech Thee for mercy. O Lord, remember not the sins of my youth nor my many transgressions. According to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord. Enter not into judgment with me; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. Forgive me all my sins. Cleanse me also from secret faults.

If I have not listened with fitting devotion and attention to Thy revealed Word, which maketh wise unto salvation, forgive me my inattention, and let me henceforth be not only a hearer, but a doer of the Word. If I have not loved Thee and my neighbor as I should, banish all coldness from my heart, and kindle the fire of divine love in my soul, that I may love Thee in future with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength, and my neighbor as myself. Mercifully forgive me, if I have not been as faithful as I should have been in my earthly calling; and grant me grace more faithfully to employ the pound which Thou hast entrusted to me, and always to be found a good steward, able to give an account of my stewardship. There is forgiveness with Thee, O God; therefore I seek it with Thee. Now that the year is closing, blot out the heavy account of my sins with the precious blood of Jesus, which I apprehend by faith. Let my sins disappear like mist from before Thine eyes. Remove them far from me, and remember them no more forever; so that in the new year I may not appear as a debtor in Thy sight.

Take me this night also under Thy protecting grace. Be a pillar of fire about me to shield me from harm. If this night should be my last in this vale of tears, receive me unto Thyself in

heaven. But if, in accordance with Thy counsel, Thou shouldest permit me to live longer on earth, do Thou in Thy goodness accompany me in the new year, lead me in Thy paths, and make my heart truly devoted to Thee. Lead me in the land of uprightness, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Let me henceforth live unto Thee, serve Thee, and obey Thee. Yea, my God, this one thing I beg of Thee before I fall asleep: give me in the new year a new mind and heart, that I may unhesitatingly do Thy will, and that my spirit, soul, and body may remain the abode of Thy Holy Spirit. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR.

MORNING PRAYER.

O MY God and Father! In these first hours of the new year which Thy goodness has permitted me to see, I appear in prayer before Thy throne. And what shall I ask of Thee? Three things I will ask in child-like confidence, hoping that Thou wilt not deny my requests.

First, I pray Thee to shield, guard, and preserve me in this new year by Thy strong and mighty hand. As long as we human beings

sojourn on earth, we are exposed to many vicissitudes and perils which may readily prove our ruin, if Thou wilt not keep and deliver us by Thy mighty power. Should harm of any kind threaten me, therefore, mercifully ward it off. Should danger of any kind impend over me, spread Thy protecting wings over me, that it may not touch me. Should crosses, tribulations, and afflictions lower over me, preserve and guard me against them. If, however, it be Thy will, that I should experience many of the sufferings of this present time, let me bear them patiently, accept them as Thy chastenings, and subordinate my will to Thine. Be with me in my hours of trial, and let me not lose courage. Deliver me speedily, and let me rejoice in Thy mercy.

Again, I pray Thee to let Jesus dwell ever within my heart. He prepared it as His temple through Holy Baptism. He took possession of it as His habitation even before I knew Him aright. And although I turned Him away by my sins, and forfeited His fellowship, yet He returned and took up His abode in me again when I sought His fellowship anew in true repentance. O let this precious treasure always be mine! Strengthen my faith in Christ's name. Let me love and value Jesus above all else. Let me, in the strength

which Thou suppliest, tread in His holy footsteps; and let the same mind be in me which was also in Him: that I may always remain most intimately united with Him, and be pleasing to Thee.

Finally, in deep humility of heart, I pray Thee to let Thy holy angels keep me during this year in all my ways. Thou sendest them as ministering spirits, to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation. And since Thou wouldest not have that any should perish, but that all should be heirs of salvation, I also belong to those who may share in the blessed ministrations of those perfect spiritual beings who continually surround Thy throne. I therefore beseech Thee to grant me the guardian care of Thy angels. Command them to keep me in all my ways. Let them encamp around me and form a wall of defense for me, that no evil may reach me, and that Satan, even if he should transform himself into an angel of light, may not be able to harm me. Let me remember that Thy angels are with me, so that I may carefully avoid sin, and permit myself to be led in the paths of righteousness.

O my God and Father! If Thou wilt grant me this threefold petition, I shall, in the new year, remain unharmed and blessed. On every day in it I shall experience proofs of Thy grace

and mercy. My soul shall be filled with light and power and strength. I shall increase in faith and holiness. I shall be enabled to follow my daily occupation in health. If Thou wilt grant me what I have now besought, I shall have everything that is needful for blessedness in body and soul. And since Thou desirest nothing but the true happiness of Thy creatures, bestow upon me in the new year the blessings for which I have prayed. Hear this first prayer which I offer up to Thee in the new year. Grant me what in all humility I have asked of Thee. Be merciful to me. Then with joyful voice I will give Thee praise, and declare what Thou hast done for me. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR NEW YEAR.

Ps. 90; 17. And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish Thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it.

Although curious and timid souls frequently desire to know beforehand whether the new year will be a happy one, it is not in the power of man to read the future. God alone can do that. Therefore that which is the habit of devout souls is to be recommended to all; namely, (1) to enter upon the new year with thanksgiving and praise for the goodness of the Most High, who has

brought them, through many a stormy wind of sorrow and many a flood of tribulation, safely to the beginning of the new year. And surely, if a ship is fortunate when it passes safely through storms and billows, we should thank God upon our knees when we have been permitted to live through a year in health and happiness.

Devout souls (2) proceed from thanksgiving to supplication, praying that the goodness of the Most High may continue to shield, govern, and preserve them. They say, "Leave me not, neither forsake me in this new year, O God of my salvation." They commit body and soul and all that they possess to His gracious keeping. They (3) strive also to become better and more devoted in the new year. They determine that, with God's help, they will walk during this year in newness of life. If aged persons boast of their many years, and yet are earthly and worldly in their mind and habits, they really have no more to boast of than any old Jew or heathen, who perhaps exceeds them in age. For godliness, which is the fruit of faith and of indwelling grace, is the only glory of youth or age. Devout souls also (4) determine at the beginning of the new year, that they will diligently hear God's Word, take it to heart, and live in accordance with its teachings.

PRAYER FOR NEW YEAR.

O Lord, Lord, merciful and long-suffering, and of great faithfulness, who art from eternity to eternity, and with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning! Behold, under Thy protection I have entered upon a new year. How excellent is Thy loving kindness, O God; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house. The river of God is full of water.

All this, O God, I have abundantly experienced in the year that is past. And I therefore desire to begin the new year in Thy name, with prayer, sighing, and supplication. My voice shalt Thou hear in the morning of this year, O Lord; in the morning, in its earliest hours, I will direct my prayer unto Thee, and will look up. O Lord, I know not what may happen to me in this new year. The year is long, the days are many, human sorrows are manifold, and the accidents which may happen to men are innumerable. Therefore I come to Thee, O mighty and loving God, and at once commit myself to Thy gracious and faithful keeping. While all things become new, while the fields grow green with verdure, and the sun rises higher in the heavens, and all nature is filled with new vital-

ity, let Thy goodness and mercy be new unto me also. I entrust my soul to Thy gracious Fatherly protection. Guard it against sin, that I may not deliberately and wilfully defile it. Lord Jesus, sanctify and cleanse me with Thy precious blood. O God the Holy Ghost, dwell in me, and let me be Thy temple. What a blessed year this will be, if I remain in Thy grace, O heavenly Father, and live as Thy child! How blessed I shall be, if I continue in Thy fellowship, O Jesus! How my light will shine before men, if Thou, O Holy Spirit, dwellest and reignest in me! If I am adorned with beauty within, I shall be well-pleasing to Thee.

And as Thou hast hitherto blessed me with life and health, so do Thou also, if it be in accordance with Thy gracious will and be good for my soul, mercifully preserve me in health through the coming year, so that I may be all the better fitted for Thy service and the duties of my earthly calling. If, however, it should be Thy will to visit me with sickness or pain, do not forsake me, but soothe my pain and, in due time, remove my sufferings. Spread out Thy hand, O Lord God, over all my dear ones and over all that I possess. Be a wall of fire around me as around Elisha. Guard me round about like the house of Job.

Grant me the power of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may, during this year, grow in holiness, and become a true child of God, fervent in prayer, and diligent in hearing and doing Thy Word. Help me so to live in the new year, that it may be said of my soul, "Old things are passed away; all things are become new;" and that there may be found in me a new longing after Thee, a new love for my neighbor, and a new desire to be and remain united with Thee. O sanctify me wholly, that my spirit, soul, and body may be kept blameless unto the day of Jesus Christ. Give me a new religious zeal, and let me increase and grow in every good work. Bless my occupation and labor; bless my going out and my coming in; and grant me all that Thou seest I need. But let me also, at the beginning of this year, bear in mind that sometime the last year of my life will come; in order that, abiding in repentance and faith, and having my lamp trimmed and my loins girt, I may always be ready to receive Thee, my Bridegroom and gracious God, with joy, and inherit the kingdom prepared for me from the foundation of the world. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

Great God! we sing that mighty hand,
By which supported still we stand:
The opening year Thy mercy shows;
Let mercy crown it, till it close.

By day, by night, at home, abroad,
Still we are guarded by our God;
By His incessant bounty fed,
By His unerring counsel led.

With grateful hearts the past we own;
The future, all to us unknown,
We to Thy guardian care commit,
And, peaceful, leave before Thy feet.

In scenes exalted or depressed,
Be Thou our joy, and Thou our rest:
Thy goodness all our hopes shall raise,
Adored through all our changing days.

When death shall interrupt our songs,
And seal in silence mortal tongues,
Our Helper God, in whom we trust,
In better worlds our souls shall boast.

—*Doddridge, 1755.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR NEW YEAR.

Great and Exalted God! My trust in Thee
has not been put to shame on this first day of
the new year; for on it I have experienced many
proofs of Thy goodness and love. Thou hast

given me gladness of heart; Thou hast caused Thy Word to be proclaimed to me; Thou hast satisfied and overwhelmed me with good things. Praise and glory and thanksgiving be unto Thee from my inmost heart.

As Thou hast hitherto graciously heard my prayer, so do Thou now hearken to my cry as I lie down to rest. At the dawn of this day and year I besought Thy favor and grace and blessing for myself. Now I will pray for others also, in accordance with Thy command to make supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks for all men. Let those whom Thou hast made to be kings and rulers on earth rule in peace and prosperity. On their well-being, health, prudence, and foresight, depend in a large measure the welfare, comfort, and peace of those over whom they rule. Crown, therefore, with long life all those rulers who bear Thy image and serve Thee; and let them preserve their vigor to a green old age. But let them always be mindful of their responsibility as the divinely constituted authorities over others, that they may deal righteously, reward the good, and punish the wicked; and that all who live under their rule may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

Arm with the plenteous gifts of Thy Spirit those whom Thou hast sent out to preach the Gospel of peace. Give them grace and strength to administer their weighty office, and let them always open their lips with joy to Thy glory. Let them be free from the fear of men, and speak the truth unreservedly to all, so that through their instrumentality Thy kingdom upon earth may be spread more and more, and an assembly of believers be builded up which shall constantly be assured of Thy favor. Watch over the whole Christian Church on earth. Deal with each and every member of it as a loving Father, reconciled through Christ. Do good unto them as unto Thy children. Bless their labor and toil for their daily bread. Ward off from them every evil, and be always their Sun and Shield. And as Thou blessest them in bodily things, so be Thou also gracious and kind to them in spiritual things. Let sinners be led to repentance by Thy goodness, that the angels of heaven may rejoice over them. Strengthen those whom Thou hast pardoned. Ground and establish them in the good, that no man may take their crown. Gladden the sorrowing and afflicted; strengthen and heal the weak and the sick; comfort and refresh the destitute. Have mercy upon all men.



ECCE HOMO.

These, O Father of mercies, are the supplications which I bring before Thee. Graciously hear them, and add Thy Yea and Amen. Then shall this be a blessed year for me and for all. O God, in whom we trust, grant us on earth these spiritual and bodily blessings, till in eternity we shall unceasingly reap blessings from Thy hands, and enter into the possession of the good things of Thy house. In the confidence that Thou wilt certainly hear my prayer, I close my eyes, and commit myself and all my fellow-Christians to Thy fatherly care. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN, AT THE BEGINNING OF
LENT, MEDITATES ON THE SUFFER-
INGS OF JESUS CHRIST.

MORNING PRAYER.

O JESUS! I would now meditate upon Thy Passion: grant me a true spirit of devotion. Let my heart behold Thee as Thou didst appear when wounded for my transgressions and bruised for my iniquities. O suffering Saviour, I humbly entreat Thee graciously to guide my meditations while in spirit I watch Thee going to the Holy City, in which the cruel

sentence of death already waits for Thee, and in which Thy bitter foes, angry at Thee without a cause, already rejoice at the prospect of Thy death.

This season of Lent, which Thou hast again graciously permitted me to reach, reminds me of the cruel sufferings which Thou, in accordance with the counsel of Thy heavenly Father, didst willingly undergo in order, as the Lamb of God, to bear and atone for the sins of the whole world. No man could redeem his brother, or reconcile him with God. The ransom which was needed was too great for any merely human being to pay in a whole eternity. Therefore Thou didst in mercy assume our flesh and blood in the fulness of time, and didst undertake by Thy bloody atonement to restore between men and God that peace which men by their sins had broken and lost.

If I am to ponder these things with profit, Thou must give me grace to do so. For without Thee I can do nothing. Therefore enlighten my understanding, that I may behold the greatness of Thy love and mercy, and may be prompted to give Thee the thanks which are meet. Sanctify my will, that I may appropriate and employ for my profit the blessings which Thou hast acquired by Thy death. Thou lovedst me even before I knew Thee. Thou gavest Thy-

self for me before I could know anything of Thee. Thou didst bear shame and scorn and contumely and sufferings of many kinds, in order that I might be blessed. For me, for my salvation, Thou didst do these things! Shall I not sing Thy praise? Shall I not laud and magnify Thee? Yea, a thousand times will I thank Thee, dearest Jesus! A thousand times be unto Thee praise and glory! For Thou hast conquered death and hell for me. I am now Thine, and Thou art mine, my Joy and my Crown. Grant that I may soon behold Thee, Thou Sun of Righteousness, in all Thy glory.

Thy sufferings have been borne: O come, Thou Bishop of souls, and unite my soul with Thee. Thou didst die for all, and consequently for me also, in order that those who live might henceforth live, not unto themselves, but unto Him that died and rose again for them. Therefore come into my soul, and give it life. Let me ever remember how much my redemption cost Thee. Let me never forget the ignominious death which Thou hadst to endure in order to free me from eternal death. Let me ever remember that Thy death was necessary for me, because I have hitherto lived for myself and the world. And may this reflection move me to live henceforth unto Thee. Pluck me as a brand out of the fire, and let not Thy sufferings have been in vain

for me. Let me henceforth be Thy disciple whom nothing can part from Thee.

To this end, grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may bring home to my heart all that I hear of Thy cruel sufferings and death during this season of Thy passion. Give me grace to occupy my mind and heart constantly with thoughts of Thee, to find my delight in Thee, and thus to secure for myself an abiding blessing. Should the world seek to lead me into vanity and folly, or should Satan disturb me by distractions of the mind, or should my own depraved heart prompt me to evil, then let me think of Thy sufferings, and in steadfast faith resist and overcome all these temptations. Help me to keep Thee ever in mind, in order that I may shun sin and be found faithful, and thus be permitted at last to enter upon the enjoyment of that blessedness which Thou hast acquired for me by Thy sufferings and death. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR LENT.

II. Cor. 5: 21. For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

The holy season of Lent was observed by the ancient Christians as a period of devotion and prayer, and was spent in special meditation upon the sufferings of Jesus. This is the way

in which the season is still observed by all true children of God. While Satan has, indeed, persuaded the children of the world to spend Lent, not in prayer and devotion, but in drunkenness, masquerades, gluttony, dissipation, and wickedness, and thus to give evidence that they do not care for the crucified Lord Jesus, but trample His bleeding love under foot; the true children of God have a different spirit, and view such conduct with horror.

They (1) not only begin this season with prayer and singing, but deny themselves earthly pleasures as far as possible, in order that they may find their joy in the blood of Jesus alone. (2) They picture to themselves all the sufferings of Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, before the Sandhedrim and the judgment-seat of Pontius Pilate, on the hill of Golgotha, and on the cross; and at the contemplation of each of these scenes they say, It was for me He suffered thus!

But while employing themselves with this holy contemplation at home and in church, (3) they are not satisfied with the mere history of these things, nor are they content to let their devotion vanish with the passing away of Lent; but just as they desire to comfort their souls through all their life and in the hour of death with the wounds of Jesus, so they constantly keep before their minds the crucified and risen Jesus. The

remembrance of these things (4) prompts them to crucify their own lusts and desires, so that they may no longer live with the world, nor commit wilful sin, but may more and more die unto sin, and rise to newness of life. (5) Such zeal and such desires will be blessed by God to the sanctification of their life.

PRAYER FOR LENT.

O Jesus, my Jesus, how great is the love which Thou, in Thy bitter suffering, hast manifested toward me! Thou art the only-begotten Son of God, the Lamb without spot, the Lord of Glory, the Holy One who did no sin: and yet Thou dost willingly endure the most shameful death and the most cruel sufferings for me, who am unrighteous, sinful, and a child of death. O how great, how unspeakable is Thy mercy! The Holy One bears my unholiness; the Perfect One, my wickedness; the Just One, my unrighteousness; the Innocent One, my guilt. My sins are laid upon Thee, that Thy righteousness might be bestowed upon me. My Jesus, in Thy sufferings I see the wrath of God against sin, the heinousness of sin, the punishment of sin. For if, for the sins of others imputed to Thee, God let Thee suffer such agony at the Mount of Olives, and permitted Thine enemies to treat Thee so cruelly, how dreadful will be the punish-

ment of those who do not permit themselves to be moved to repentance, to faith, and to holy living!

My Jesus, I come before Thee, and look in faith upon Thy sufferings. Thou enterest into the garden of Gethsemane, and Thy sweat is, as it were, great drops of blood: O it is for me! that I may be freed from the power of Satan. Thou art led before the judgment-seat, accused, and condemned to death: O it is for me! that I, appearing after my death and on the last day before Thy judgment-seat, may be acquitted. Many are Thy accusers, but none there is that pleads for Thee: O it is for me! that, when my sins and my conscience accuse me, Thou mayest plead for me. Thou art scourged, Thou art bruised and bleeding: O it is for me! that I may not be scourged on account of my sins. Thou art led forth to death: O it is for me! that my death may be a blessing in disguise, the portal to heaven, and my access to the Father. Thou art crucified: O it is for me! for Thou, O Lamb of God, hast borne all my sins. Thou diest on the cross; O it is for me! that through Thy death I might have life. Thou art buried: O it is for me! that Thou mightest hallow my grave. Truly this is love, this is mercy, that I, through Thy dreadful sufferings, obtain life and grace and the forgiveness of all my sins! The chas-

tisement of my peace was upon Thee, and with Thy stripes I am healed. I will keep Thy sufferings before my eyes, wherever I may be. Thy sufferings and death shall abide in my heart till soul and body are sundered.

As Israel was free from guilt when it brought a lamb for the sacrifice and saw its warm blood flow, so I also know that by faith in Thee I am reconciled to God and enjoy His favor, because Thou, O Jesus, wast slain for me as the Lamb of God, and Thy blood was abundantly shed for me. Thy blood is the true blood of reconciliation, purification, and atonement.

O my Jesus, whenever my heart would lead me into sin, I will think of the sufferings which Thou didst endure, and the blood which Thou didst shed. When the world by its evil example would entice me to do wrong, I will set before mine eyes Thy bleeding form at the Mount of Olives, in Thy scourging, and on the cross. When my sins fill me with fear, I will flee to Thy wounds. When my conscience makes me afraid, I will cling to Thy blood as my ransom. And in the hour of death I desire to know nothing but Thee, O Jesus. Thy holy name shall be my last word; Thy bleeding form shall be my last thought; Thy last words on the cross shall be my last sigh in death, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." In that last hour, be Thou,

O Jesus, my Comfort, my Joy, my Strength, and
my Stay. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our stains away;
A sacrifice of nobler name,
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand,
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burden Thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And knows her guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing His bleeding Love.

—Watts, 1709. a.

EVENING PRAYER FOR LENT.

O my Jesus, my King, and My Head! Before I lay my weary limbs to rest, and fall asleep, I would commune once more with Thee, and commend myself to Thy keeping. My meditations to-day upon Thy sufferings have awakened in me the sweetest emotions. O let those emotions be permanent, and let the remembrance of Thy Passion bear fruit in me.

O dearest Jesus! through Thy sufferings Thou hast hallowed all the sufferings which may come upon Thy members, and hence those also which may come upon me. Thou wast sorrowful even unto death; yea, Thou didst experience what it means to be utterly forsaken. And all this Thou didst endure, in order that I might be delivered from similar distresses through Thee. Be not forgetful of me in such hours, but be my help in trouble. When I cry, be not silent unto me. Sorrow and dismay take hold on me, when Thou hidest Thy face and seemest not to know me or not to care for me. Trembling and anguish fill my soul, when Thou appearest to turn me away in my bodily or spiritual distress, as if I had nothing to seek from Thee. Therefore I entreat Thee, hide not from me the gracious light of Thy countenance. In such dark hours rouse me to faith, that I may cling firmly to Thy prom-

ises and Thy love. Let me confidently hope that Thou wilt turn for me my mourning into dancing, and wilt put off my sack-cloth and gird me with gladness.

O yes, my Jesus, speak to me words of comfort in my afflictions. Leave me not, neither forsake me. Let me remember the joyful end which crowned Thy sufferings, and firmly trust in Thy goodness and mercy. Let me be like Thee, and imitate Thy example in my sufferings. Let me bear with cheerfulness all that a wise Providence sees fit to have me bear. Make me patient when troubles come upon me like a flood. Enable me to bear with meek submission all that befalls me. Let the same mind be in me which was also in Thee, O Jesus. Let me not seek to prescribe the hour when Thou shalt help, but ever say with Thee, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." Let me imitate Thy example in my hours of sorrow, that at last I may also share in Thy eternal glory. Let the thought of Thee banish my sadness. Keep Thy bleeding image ever before my eyes; then shall I never lack for comfort, but be powerfully quickened and refreshed.

Abide with me to-night. And to-morrow when I awake, yea, on every succeeding morning when I awake, let my soul be satisfied with Thy likeness. Strengthen me constantly by Thy grace

even to my end. And when the hour of my death arrives, let me look forward in confidence to the dissolution of soul and body, and die in peace. Take my spirit into Thy hands; and let Thy sufferings for me hover before my eyes, that I may draw from them comfort, strength, and quickening in abundant measure. Amen.

ON GOOD FRIDAY. THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATES ON THE DEATH OF JESUS.

Isa. 57: 1. The righteous perisheth, and no man taketh it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

GOOD Friday, the day on which the blessed Jesus suffered and died, is, indeed, often observed as a quiet day even by worldly persons, from a sense of outward shame or fear. But for the true children of God it is not simply a quiet day, but a day of special devotion. On this day (1) they meditate upon the Passion of Jesus, as having been endured out of love for them. O depth of love! O love immeasurable! which prompted Christ to tread the way of sorrow. Love impelled Him to become man: love impelled Him to give Himself into the death of

the cross for us. (2) Christians meditate upon the suffering of Jesus as innocent suffering. We are not to imagine that Jesus, even in the least, did anything worthy of punishment; for He was holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners. He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. On His part, it was a suffering wholly undeserved. But He voluntarily took it upon Himself for our sakes.

It was a suffering (3) appointed to Him by His heavenly Father. He suffered according to the determinate counsel of God (Acts 2:23), and knew beforehand what awaited Him. This does not excuse the Jews, as though they were compelled to act as they did in order to carry out God's will. For just as in Gethsemane Jesus was already sorrowful even unto death, and His sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood; so God would have been able, without any assistance from the Jews, to augment the suffering of Jesus even unto death. God used the stubbornness of the Jews for His own ends; but it was not their intention and purpose to do God's will. They simply sought to vent their wickedness and spite upon Christ. So Joseph's brethren did not sell him in order to make him lord over Egypt. They meant it evil with him; but God overruled their evil purposes for good. (Gen. 50:20). (4)

The sufferings of Christ were actual sufferings. He felt the pain and the anguish in all their intensity.

All these things the believing soul reflects upon, and let them be a mirror, in which he sees both the anger of God against sin and the love of God which desires man's salvation.

PRAYER ON GOOD FRIDAY.

O loving and blessed Jesus! I come before Thee to meditate in true devotion upon Thy bitter Passion. O let Thy sufferings incite me earnestly to shun all evil lusts, and never to forget how much it cost Thee to redeem me. O Thou Lamb, innocently slain! Thou didst suffer for all my sins, yea, for the sins, the guilt, the misdeeds, the unrighteousness, the wickedness of the whole world. Our guilt was laid on Thee, and counted as though it were Thine; and Thou didst appear before the divine judgment as though Thou wert the greatest sinner, yea, the very personification of sin. And as our sins were cast upon Thee, Thou spotless Lamb, so our punishment came on Thee like a flood. Contempt, shame, and blasphemy were poured upon Thee during Thy public ministry; and at the end of Thy life Thy sufferings became extreme. Thou wast not only tried and condemned by

both the spiritual and the temporal court, but didst bear the most cruel pains of body. Thou wast wounded, scourged, torn, and bleeding.

Behold, O children of men! Was there ever grief like the grief of Jesus? His head was crowned with thorns, His body bruised and bleeding from the dreadful scourging; the nails were driven through His hands and feet; His side was pierced with a spear: and He could truthfully say, I am a worm and not a man. Not only was His holy body so cruelly maltreated, but He bore the most extreme mental agony, so that His soul was sorrowful even unto death. The waves of divine wrath that rolled over Him, and the pains of hell that took hold on Him, caused Him to cry out, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And then followed death.

O Lamb, slain on Calvary! All this Thou didst endure for me, for my good, for my comfort, for my peace, for my redemption, for my welfare, for my salvation! For if Thou hadst not come into the world, taken our nature upon Thee, and voluntarily died for our sins, we should have been condemned forever. But now, if I believe on Thee, and in the confidence of faith appropriate Thy holy blood, I am not condemned, but am saved through Thee. If I fol-

low Thee in holy living, and bring forth true fruits of repentance, I shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

O my Jesus! Let Thy bitter sufferings always remain in my mind and heart, that I may comfort myself with them, and may through them be justified and saved. Let me not spend a single day on which Thy bleeding image is not before my eyes. Let Thy sufferings, Thy blood, Thy wounds, be engraved upon my hands, yea, upon my heart, so that, with each breath I draw, nothing but Jesus' sufferings, Jesus' death, Jesus' blood may be in my thoughts, and that I may thus be drawn away from the world and be made holy and pure.

My Jesus! As Thy sufferings quicken, rejoice, comfort, awaken, and edify me, so do also Thy seven words upon the cross. For me also Thou didst pray: "Forgive them:" forgive this soul what it has done against Thee. For me thou criedst, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" so that I might never, in afflictions, in need, in death, before Thy judgment on the last day, here in time, or there in eternity, be forsaken. For me Thou saidst: "I thirst." O grant that I may again embrace Thee by faith. Let me thirst after Thee as the hart panteth after the water brooks, and be gladdened and

quickened by Thy love. For me Thou didst feel care and concern when Thou saidst, "Behold Thy mother." Even though I groan beneath the cross, and am forsaken in my tribulations by all men as was Mary, Thou wilt pity me, have mercy on me, care for me, help me, and be gracious to me. O let me, in the hour of my death, hear the words: "To-day Thou shalt be with me in Paradise." Comfort me with this assurance of my salvation in the days of health, speak it to me on my death-bed, and let it be fulfilled in me after my departure from this world. For me Thou saidst: "It is finished." All has now been done that I should have done, all has been borne that I should have suffered. Now salvation, life, peace, joy, comfort, eternal blessedness, the crown of life, and the robe of white have been acquired. Yea, Thy last words on the cross shall also be my words of comfort and joy in death, and I will pray in the words in which Thou didst pray: "Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Amen.

HYMN.

7, 6. D.

O Sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded
With thorns, Thine only crown!

O sacred Head, what glory,
What bliss, till now, was thine!
Yet, though despised and gory,
I joy to call Thee mine.

How art Thou pale with anguish,
With sore abuse and scorn!
How does that visage languish,
Which once was bright as morn!
What Thou, my Lord, hast suffered,
Was all for sinners' gain;
Mine, mine, was the transgression,
But Thine the deadly pain.

Lo, here I fall, my Saviour!
'Tis I deserve Thy place!
Look on me with Thy favor,
Vouchsafe to me Thy grace.
Receive me, my Redeemer,
My shepherd, make me Thine!
Of every good the fountain,
Thou art the Spring of mine.

What language shall I borrow
To thank Thee, dearest Friend,
For this Thy dying sorrow,
Thy pity without end!
O make me Thine forever,
And should I fainting be,
Lord, let me never, never,
Outlive my love to Thee.

Forbid that I should leave Thee;
O Jesus, leave not me;

In faith may I receive Thee,
When death shall set me free.
When strength and comfort languish,
And I must hence depart,
Release me then from anguish
By Thine own wounded heart.

— *Bernard of Clairvaux, d. 1153.*

Paul Gerhardt, 1653.

James Waddell Alexander, Tr. 1830. a.

THE CHRISTIAN REJOICES OVER THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

MORNING PRAYER FOR EASTER.

O JESUS! While I lay asleep in Thy arms during the past night, I was as one dead. But now, opening my eyes and beholding the bright light of day, I begin, so to speak, to live anew. Yea, now that Thou livest and hast risen from the dead, I live indeed. Thy resurrection has provided for me life and full abundance. Let Thy divine life be clearly manifest in me. Let me not only experience it myself, but let others behold it in me. As in the realm of nature the return of the sap and the new life in the trees is plainly evident to the eyes, even so and much more in the kingdom of grace must it be seen that Thy holy life has entered into the soul. Therefore, since by Thy resurrection I have become par-

taker of Thy life, let me manifest its power before the world.

Let me manifest this life toward God. Let me keep Him in my thoughts, commune constantly with Him, and begin and perform all things in His name. May I never be ashamed to speak of Him, to praise Him as my best and dearest Friend, and to magnify His goodness before all men. But guard me that I may not do these things from wrong motives or for self-glorification, but out of fervent love for Him and for the glory of His holy name.

Let me manifest Thy life in me toward my neighbor. Let me show concern for his welfare, speak to him about the interests of his soul, and rejoice with him in Thy love. Let me consecrate my hours to Thee, and never spend them in vain conversation and sinful amusements. Grant me, from Thine inexhaustible fulness, the grace and strength which I need, in order not to judge my neighbor unkindly when his actions do not seem right to me; not to ascribe everything to his ignorance; not to find fault with the conduct of my superiors, nor to regard them as lacking in common sense; but to speak with becoming humility of every one, and thus to make manifest that Thy Spirit dwells and rules in me. When I speak

with others concerning Thee, let it always be with the deepest reverence, and never for the purpose of exhibiting my knowledge rather than promoting Thy glory.

Finally, let Thy life in me be manifest in those duties which I must observe toward myself. Let me gladly remain in Thy fellowship, ever find my delight in Thee, and unceasingly seek to know Thee better and to live in closer communion with Thee. For in so doing I shall find my temporal and eternal happiness, as well as perform what is my bounden duty. Therefore help me, O risen Saviour, to hold that fast which I have, that no man may take from me the crown which I already possess in believing hope. Let me never in any way forsake Thee. Let neither height nor depth, nor death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor any other creature separate me from Thy love and fellowship. Let me not only appreciate and value above all else those gifts of grace which Thou, by Thy indwelling, hast bestowed upon me, but employ them diligently and properly, so as always to reap the sweetest fruits from them. And when my heart is kindled with Thy love, and my knowledge increases and abounds, let this spiritual growth continue in

me uninterruptedly. Let me strive unweariedly to turn others also from the error of their way, and to rescue their soul from death.

If Thou, O my Saviour, wilt, as I confidently hope, grant me this grace which I seek,—to live in Thee and always to manifest Thy life in me by my walk and conversation —, then let me not fall again into a carnal sleep and perish, but henceforth continually rise and walk in newness of life, and bring forth good fruits, till, in Thine own good time, Thou shalt take me to life eternal, and make me partaker of Thy heavenly joys. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR EASTER.

Rev. 1: 18. I am He that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of death and hell.

The holy Easter Festival is a season of joy for all the children of God; for they rejoice from the heart in the risen Jesus. (1) They rejoice over the completion of their redemption. For, after Jesus, who had offered Himself as a substitute to do and endure all things for us, had risen from the dead, the ransom for sin was fully paid. God was reconciled. He accepted the death of His Son in place of our death, and now for His sake bestows upon us eternal life. (2) Believing souls rejoice over the many witnesses and the

infallible proofs of the resurrection of Jesus. For have we not glorious proofs in the fact, that He let Himself be seen ten times after His resurrection, that He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once (1 Cor. 15: 5), that He spoke with His disciples and ate with them (Acts 10:41), and that He let Himself be touched and handled by them (John 20:25; 1 John 1:1)? Are they not proofs which make it impossible to doubt the reality of the resurrection? Unbelief is still vanquished by every believer, because Jesus lives in us (Gal. 2:20), and therefore must have risen from the dead and be alive. Believers rejoice (3) because the gracious forgiveness of their sins is sealed and assured to them. They have peace with God, and through Christ dare draw near to God with the confidence that He will also draw near to them. (4) They are assured that the resurrection of Jesus will comfort them in death. For by His own death Jesus has robbed their death of its terrors, hallowed their grave, and assured them of their resurrection to eternal life. (5) Therefore they spend the holy Easter season, as well as the other festivals, in heartfelt devotion, with prayer and hymns, and in the contemplation of the mercies of God. (6) They endeavor to rise spiritually every day from the sins in

which they were buried; that is, to forsake their evil ways and habits. And on the other hand, they seek to spend the remainder of their days in faith and holiness, to the glory of the Lord.

PRAYER FOR EASTER.

The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous; the right hand of the Lord is exalted, the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly. O risen Jesus, mighty conquering Prince, Victor over death, powerful Samson! Permitted, as I am by Thy grace, to celebrate this holy festival, my heart is filled with purest joy. With bended knees and folded hands, I say: Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Jesus is risen from the dead" is the joyful news. The surety is released from the prison of the grave; consequently, sin must be forgiven, God be reconciled, and guilt be wiped out. It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Jesus hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light.

O Jesus, dearest Friend! Thy resurrection brings me a threefold consolation. I say on this festival: The resurrection of Jesus is my victory. Now my sins can no more condemn

me; for through the blood and wounds of Christ, and through His resurrection, I have the forgiveness of my sins, no matter how great or how numerous they may be. Here is a full ransom, a complete redemption. In Christ we have the redemption through His blood, namely, the forgiveness of sins. Death cannot harm me; for Christ has overcome death, and has made my death a sweet slumber, yea, a going to the Father. Satan is a vanquished foe; though he roar, he cannot devour me; though he accuse me, Jesus intercedes for me, bestows upon me His righteousness, and enables me to stand before God justified and saved. Hell alarms me not; for Christ has delivered me from hell. He that believeth on Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. O happy Day, O Day of joy, on which my salvation is confirmed and sealed! Jesus lives, and I also shall live: here, united with Him by faith; and yonder, in everlasting glory.

Filled with joy by Thy resurrection, my soul further says: The resurrection of Jesus is my resurrection. Since the Head is risen, the members also shall rise. I shall not only rise on the last day like all men, but, because of Christ's merit and satisfaction, I shall rise as a child of God and a joint-heir with Christ. Therefore I fear not the grave; I regard it as

a chamber of rest, as a mother's lap, as the place where I shall repose till my Saviour says: Arise, ye dead, and appear before the judgment-throne. O what glory the Saviour has secured for me! How can I, O risen Jesus, sufficiently declare and laud and magnify Thy grace and mercy? O the Love, which bestows life and salvation upon me! What was lost through Adam's fall is now regained.

O my Saviour, Thy resurrection is meant to give me comfort in times of suffering. Thou layest locked in the tomb, but Thou camest forth in glory; even so the night of my sufferings shall pass away, and Thy sun of joy and grace and help and refreshing shall shine for me again. Thou remainedst, O Jesus, but three days in the grave; so also shall my tribulations have an end; the weary years of suffering shall be followed by the year of jubilee. Thou roset with a glorified body; the wounds and nail-prints were no longer bloody or painful, but lustrous like the sun; so shall my body be glorified and transformed when Thou wakest me from the dust. I shall receive again my former body, and in my flesh I shall see God. The body whose members have served Thee here shall be made partaker of the heavenly splendor, and be glorified. Yea, because Thou livest, O

Jesus, I have in Thee a faithful, constant Friend, who will provide for me in life, preserve me in sufferings, defend me against my foes, gladden me in sorrow, refresh me in death, guard me in the grave, receive me into glory, and adorn me with the promised crown of life. Amen.

HYMN.

8. 7. D.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Hearts to heaven, and voices raise;
Sing to God a hymn of gladness,
Sing to God a hymn of praise.
He who on the cross a victim
For the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of Glory,
Now is risen from the dead.

Now the iron bars are broken;
Christ from death to life is born,—
Glorious life, and life immortal,
On this holy Easter morn.
Christ hath triumphed, and we conquer
By his mighty enterprise:
We with Christ to life eternal
By His resurrection rise.

Christ is risen, we are risen:
Shed on us Thy heavenly grace,
Rain, and dew, and gleams of glory,
From the brightness of Thy face;

That we, Lord, with hearts in heaven,
 Here on earth may fruitful be,
 And by angel-hands be gathered,
 And be ever safe with Thee.

— *Christopher Wordsworth, 1865.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR EASTER.

O living Saviour! Lord Jesus Christ! Abide with me; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. Great is Thy grace to me! For Thou hast not only permitted me once again to celebrate in health the joyful festival of Thy triumphant resurrection, — a mercy for which I owe Thee endless thanks; but Thou hast also, as my living Saviour, caused most comforting truths to be proclaimed to me and to be brought home to my heart. Let not the tokens of Thy love to me cease. Abide with me in mercy, and hearken to the prayer with which I come to Thee before I fall asleep.

With the first glimpse of the day, when I thought of Thy blessed resurrection, I prayed fervently that Thou wouldest let Thy life be manifest in me. If, because of any defect in me, Thou canst not grant the prayer I uttered, O do Thou Thyself produce in me the needed change, that I may be made partaker of the coveted joy. As long as I remain dead in sin and am not risen to newness of life, I cannot

live in Thee, nor manifest in my outward conduct the life which flows from Thee. Therefore do Thou reveal to me the real condition of my soul, and bring me to such a state as will make me in time and eternity Thine own. Cry out to me: Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and I will give Thee light. Let me hearken to this Thy voice, that I may arise and come to Thee, and may yield my heart to the operations of Thy grace.

Work in me the spiritual resurrection, that I may no longer lie dead in my sins. I cannot do this by my own power; for even though I diligently read what is calculated to edify me, and listen attentively to those who show me the way, I cannot by my own power become a new man nor live in Thee. It is Thy work; Thou must do it. Thou must work in me both to will and to do of Thy good pleasure. Therefore let Thy grace awaken me from the sleep of sin which has hitherto enveloped and fettered me. Enable me to put away all fear of men, and to seek Thee with all my powers. Let me, by an inner denial, give up my own ease and everything that would hinder me from coming to Thee, so that I may obtain and keep the true and real life in Thee. As Thou didst fit Thyself for Thy resurrection by taking back Thy noble life out of the power of death, so do Thou also

fit me for my spiritual resurrection by bestowing new life on me. Give to my intellect a clearer understanding of the way in which I should walk. Give to my will a greater ability to do what is pleasing to Thee. Pour into my heart better and purer motives for all my actions. Let me do all things to Thy honor and glory. Endow me with obedient willingness to follow Thy example and to conform my mind to Thine. If Thou, O my Saviour, wilt grant these requests, then shall I be able to rise and to prove that I am a new creature.

But as Thou, after Thy blessed resurrection, not only hadst a glorified body, but didst live in a manner altogether different from that which characterized Thee before; so let me, when I have spiritually risen with Thee, feel and perceive this newly received life in me. Let others also perceive it. Let every one see by my godly conversation, my blameless walk, and my good works done to please Thee, that I am no longer darkness, but light in the Lord; that I have been called out of darkness, and, in obedience to the call, have been translated out of darkness into Thy marvelous light. Let me from this time forth deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world. Let me cut loose from the world and live for Thee alone, so that Thou mayest ever

live in me. Preserve me from falling asleep again after Thou, Lord Jesus, has awakened me. Keep my eyes constantly open and watchful, that I may not lose my new spiritual life, but may be changed in Thy image from glory to glory, till at last I shall be united and live with Thee for evermore. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATES UPON THE ASCENSION OF JESUS CHRIST.

MORNING PRAYER FOR ASCENSION DAY.

ETERNAL Highpriest, glorified Jesus, who art holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners! Having made atonement for our sins, Thou ascendest into heaven, yea, above the heaven of heavens, and preparest for Thy redeemed ones a place, to which they shall come when they have finished their course in faith. Thou prayest for them, and wilt gather them at last to Thyself, that where Thou art, there they also may be eternally.

I, too, belong to those whom Thou hast bought and redeemed with Thy precious blood; for Thy blood, flowing from Thy wounded side, was shed for all. O how I rejoice over Thy triumphant ascension, because thereby Thou preparest the

way for me, and showest me the place to which I shall come, if I part from this life as Thy servant! O how I rejoice as I now awake, and in spirit hear the hosts of heaven singing, "Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth"! For I too, when I shall have died in peace, and shall have entered that joyful kingdom to which Thou hast paved the way for me by Thy ascension to Thy Father and my Father, to Thy God and my God, shall join that glad refrain, and unite with those perfect spirits in singing to Thee hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

But inasmuch as Thy ascension, O Prince of Life, can avail me nothing, if I remain in the bondage of sin; and Thy victory over death and sin and hell can profit me nothing, unless I also contend against these enemies of my soul; since I cannot attain to the heavenly glory upon which Thou hast entered, unless I be heavenly in mind: I beseech Thee, O dearest Saviour, to grant me grace and strength to enter upon the new spiritual life, and to set my affection on things above. To this end, do Thou kindle within me a fervent desire to know the treasures of grace which Thou hast acquired by Thy sufferings and death, and by Thy ascension and sitting at the right hand of the Father, — treasures which are described in Thy divine Word; so that I may be incited to love Thee truly, and to prefer Thee above

all else. And then, when I have known the glory, the righteousness, the peace, and the grace which Thou hast acquired for me, let me diligently seek to enter into true and hearty fellowship with Thee. Give me a living faith, which will hide me in Thy wounds and Thee in my heart, and which will unite me so intimately with Thee, that I shall live in Thee and Thou in me. Let me enjoy constant communion with Thee, pray fervently and unceasingly, and so unweariedly employ my thoughts with Thee, that where my treasure is, there my heart may be also.

Guard me against losing this heavenly disposition through love of the world. Keep me from seeking after earthly things which would burden my spirit, weigh me down to the earth, and make me unfit for heaven. Let me constantly direct my heart to that place where I long to be for ever; and let me desire to depart solely in order that I may be with Thee. Lead me thus by Thy side as long as I must continue, in accordance with Thy will, to dwell in this vale of tears. And when I have closed my eyes, and yielded up my spirit into Thy hands, take me unto Thyself in heaven. O how beautiful, how lovely, how glorious, how peaceful I shall then be with Thee! I confidently hope to live with Thee for ever. Let not my hope be put to shame. Satisfy my longing, and let me to-day yet be

placed in the desired state of grace, and steadfastly remain in it: so that when I die, I may behold Thy face, and when I awake again, I may be satisfied with Thy likeness; and that then I may never more be removed from Thy side. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR ASCENSION DAY.

John 20: 17. I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.

The contemplation of the Ascension of Christ cannot fail to be comforting and edifying to the believing soul. (1) It assures him of the certainty of his redemption. Since the Conquering Prince returns to heaven, the place from which He has come, it follows that He has completed the work for which He came to earth. In His conception and birth, He came forth from the Father; and now, in His ascension, He returns to the Father, having acquired for men peace, joy, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, and salvation.

The ascension (2) reminds the believer of the fact, that here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. Neither the godly nor the wicked abide permanently upon the earth. The godly do not desire to remain, because they look for better things; and the wicked, though they desire to do so, cannot remain. For it is

appointed unto men once to die; and after that, the judgment. Since men cannot have a permanent home upon earth, the godly direct their thoughts to their eternal home. (3) The believers daily remind themselves of the fact, that they must leave behind them their house, their clothes, their goods, their dear ones. (4) In order that, when the hour of their deliverance from the struggles of this life comes, they may find a place waiting for them in glory, they daily ascend in thought to heaven, and keep heaven present in their minds. They cease to love the world, and cling to Christ in faith. They forsake the world by no longer living according to its will and customs, but according to the will of God. (5) Therefore, when they think of heaven, they say to themselves, Yonder is my Fatherland, my heritage, and my eternal home.

PRAYER FOR ASCENSION DAY.

God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of the trumpet. Sing praises to God; sing praises to our King. Thus, O my Jesus, mighty victorious Prince, I celebrate Thy ascension, by which, having finished the work of redeeming the human race, Thou enteredst into Thy glory. All our foes, the devil, the world, sin, and death lie prostrate beneath Thy feet.

Thou hast delivered us from them. When Thou hadst Thyself purged our sins, Thou satest down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

My Jesus, all this is a great comfort to me; and I rejoice over it from my inmost soul. As Thy coming to earth brought joy, so Thy ascension brings consolation. Thou sittest at the right hand of God and intercedest for us. Consequently, when I pray, I pray not alone. Thy Spirit prays in me, and Thou prayest for me. And thus my poor weak prayer is graciously heard for thy sake.

I rejoice when I think of Thy words: "I go to prepare a place for you; that where I am, there ye may be also." My soul is refreshed by the knowledge that Thou hast prepared a place for me, and that, when I die, I shall enter that place and dwell in it for ever. Thou art crowned with glory and honor, and hast laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which Thou, the righteous Judge, wilt give to all them that love Thy appearing. Thou hast entered upon Thy kingdom, and rulest over heaven and earth, in the realms of nature, of grace, and of glory. And some day Thou wilt say to me, as well as to all the believers: Come, ye blessed of My Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

Thou didst, according to Thy human nature, obtain gifts for men, that Thou mightest bestow them upon us, Thy brethren who believe in Thee. O my Jesus, give to me a twofold gift which I sorely need: Give me here on earth Thy Holy Spirit, — godliness, purity, meekness, humility, Thy righteousness, sonship with God, life, and peace; and at last give me also the eternal blessedness and glory of heaven. Since Thou, my Head, art exalted, I know that Thou wilt draw me after Thee. Since Thy Spirit gives me life, I shall dwell eternally with Thee. O what consolation, what joy, what glory is this which my Saviour promises to His disciples: “Where I am, there my servant shall be also.” O my Jesus, let me be where Thou art; draw me after Thee. Thou sittest at the right hand of God: bring me to the company of the holy angels and the elect; let me behold the glory which Thou hast prepared for the believers.

And although, O dearest Friend of my soul, Thou hast removed from me Thy visible presence, Thou art still with me invisibly in accordance with Thy promise, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Therefore I am content; for I know that Thou art with me in my hours of need. Thou deliverest me from danger, Thou refreshest me in afflic-

tions, Thou comfortest me in sorrow, Thou guardest me against adversities. I am, therefore, of good courage: Jesus is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? Though I see Thee not, yet I love Thee, and I know that I shall one day behold Thee and rejoice in Thee with unspeakable joy. I shall see Thee after death, when my soul ascends to heaven; and I shall see Thee with these eyes on the last day, when I rise from the dead. To this end, I will daily ascend in thought to heaven, and behold with the eye of faith my future home, my future crown, my abiding place, my robe of white. I will, as long as I am still on earth, forsake the world with my heart, with my love, with my life: I will shun all its vanities, habits, and sins, because these would hinder my ascension. In this way I will live, while I live, unto the Lord; and when I die, I shall die in the Lord. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Hail the day that sees Him rise,
Glorious, to His native skies!
Christ, awhile to mortals given,
Re-ascends His native heaven.

There the glorious triumph waits;
Lift your heads, eternal gates!
Wide unfold the radiant scene;
Take the King of Glory in!

Him though highest heaven receives,
Still He loves the earth He leaves;
Though returning to His throne,
Still He calls mankind His own.

See, He lifts His hands above!
See, He shows the prints of love!
Hark, His gracious lips bestow
Blessings on His Church below!

Still for us His death He pleads;
Prevalent, He intercedes:
Near Himself prepares our place,
Harbinger of human race.

There we shall with Thee remain,
Partners of Thy endless reign;
There Thy face unclouded see,
Find our heaven of heavens in Thee.

— *C. Wesley, 1739. a.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR ASCENSION DAY.

Living and exalted Saviour! Thou hast ascended on high, and in Thy human nature art set down on the right hand of the majesty of God. By Thy Ascension, as well as by Thy Incarnation, Thou hast ennobled my human nature, and acquired for me a title to heaven. For this I laud and praise and thank Thee.

But I beseech Thee, let the purpose of Thy ascension,—that all believers may be forever where Thou art, and be one with Thee as Thou with

the Father art One,—be accomplished in me. What joy fills my heart at the thought of this purpose! O let it be fulfilled in me, that my joy may be unending. Let me, O merciful Lord, here in this world already enjoy the blessedness of a true union with Thee. Let me, as a member of Thy body, be inseparably united with Thee, my Head. Let me attain in Thee power and strength and increase unto all good works, and remain united with Thee forever.

To this end, let me be one with Thee and all believers with respect to the blessings which Thou hast acquired for us by Thy sufferings and death: let me share with them in those blessings, and thus obtain peace, forgiveness of sins, righteousness, access to the throne of grace, and the assurance of eternal life.

Let me be one in spirit with Thee and all believers. Let Thy Spirit, and not the world's spirit, lead me. Let Him enlighten, sanctify, rule and glorify me, and unite me with Thee, even as Thou art united with the Father in one Spirit and Life. Let me be one in love with all believers. Let me love them with all sincerity and constancy, and wish and do to them only such things as I would have them wish and do to me. And since love is the bond of perfectness, in which all those virtues which are becoming to the Christian are embraced, and

through which they must be exercised, let my love for them be fervent and steadfast.

As Thou art united with the Father in unspeakable love, so let me be united with Thee and Him. Let me fervently love Thee and Him who hath sent Thee, and consecrate to Thee and to Him my will, my understanding, my desires, and my entire being. If Thou wilt grant me this grace, exalted Lord, then shall I be truly happy both during my journey upon earth and after its completion. If through Thy Spirit I attain to union with Thee, then Thou art mine, and I am Thine; and then I shall always be sure of Thy help, favor, love, and blessing. Then can I ever lean on Thee; I need fear no ill; I can hope for every good thing from Thee. O what blessedness is mine!

Nor shall this blessedness depart from me when I cease to live on earth. On the contrary, it shall reach a higher stage and a greater degree of perfection. For when, resting in the arms in which Thou holdest me constantly as Thine own, I close my eyes and yield up my spirit, Thou wilt transform my soul, and receive it unto Thyself in glory. The Head can not forsake its members. Thou wilt unite me with Thee forever, and let me taste at Thy side joy and rapture and bliss. Thou wilt give me

the place which, by Thy death and Thy ascension, Thou hast prepared for me in Thy and my Father's kingdom, and wilt lead me into the everlasting habitations of peace.

O what blessedness is therefore in store for me, when I shall have become one with Thee, as Thou art one with the Father! What happiness awaits me, when I shall have attained to Thy fellowship! I already rejoice in anticipation of that blessed state. O let my rejoicing not be in vain, but unite me with Thee during this life, so that here on earth I may have a foretaste of heaven, and that there in eternity I may, together with all believers, remain united with Thee and Thy Father and the Holy Spirit forever. Assure me, through Thy Holy Spirit, before I fall asleep, that my prayer has been heard. Let it not have come before Thee in vain; but let me henceforth and forever be and remain one with Thee. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATES UPON THE
OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY
GHOST.

MORNING PRAYER FOR PENTECOST.

O Spirit of Grace! who from eternity proceeded from the Father and the Son, and who, after the ascension of Jesus, wast poured out visibly upon the apostles in order to fit them for their holy office! I rejoice to-day in Thy outpouring; and I beseech Thee, enter into my heart also, and fit it to be a temple of the living God. Enable me to apprehend that eternal life for which I was created, and for which I was purchased by my Saviour. Thou art the earnest of our adoption and of our inheritance. Do Thou therefore dwell within me, and assure me that I am a child of God, and have a share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

But in order that I may not deceive myself with vain delusions, let me experience Thy sanctifying operations and the tokens of Thy indwelling. Work in me true quietness of heart and mind, that I may take no pleasure in the tumult and sinful unrest of the world, but may flee them and find my delight in Thee alone. Cleanse my heart from all impurity, wickedness, and sin, and let me with each year and week

and day become more pure. Purge me more and more from all that is evil; and let it be manifest to myself and to others that an improvement has taken place in me. And because without holiness I shall not see the Lord, sanctify me wholly. Kindle in me the true light which I still lack, that I may grow in the knowledge of God, have a desire more fully to understand the ways of heaven, and employ all diligence to walk in them without growing weary in well-doing.

Let me recognize thoroughly my own wretched and lost condition and the need in which I languish, that I may be brought to true humility of heart. Let me appreciate the blessedness and glory to which I attain through Thy gracious indwelling, that I may be filled with greater love for Thee. Let love make me obedient to Thy will, and prompt me to yield my heart to Thy gracious operations. Let me not resist Thy grace, but permit Thee to restrain me from all evil, and to incite me to all that is good. Let me ever obey Thy promptings, and follow Thy guidance. Lead me in the land of uprightness. Let me ever walk on the strait and narrow way that leadeth unto life.

And when Thou, O blessed Holy Spirit, hast thus worked in me, and manifested Thy power, and kept me faithful; then let me, like the apos-

bles after Thou didst rest on them, speak with new tongues, so that every one may hear that the old sinful, unseemly words, which are so unbecoming to a Christian, have been removed far from my lips. Let all who associate with me perceive that I have become a new creature and am Thy child. Sanctify me ever more and more, that my spirit and body may remain Thy temple. Let me here in this world attain the firm assurance of my salvation, possess the righteousness of Christ and the divine peace acquired by Him, and find my joy in Thee. And let me in the next world obtain an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal in the heavens. Give me a glorious crown and a beauteous robe of white; and let me there praise Thee, together with the Father and the Son, for evermore. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR PENTECOST.

Luke 11: 13. If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?

Not only has God, in His pitying love, planned from all eternity to bestow good things upon us; and not only has Jesus purchased us with His precious blood: but the Holy Spirit, who is the most glorious, needful, and blessed gift of

God, desires to lead, sanctify, and govern us in this vale of tears.

The Holy Spirit (1) is the most *glorious* gift; for what greater thing could God do for us, than give us His Spirit to be our Leader and Guide? God, in His infinite love, is not satisfied simply to let His holy angels accompany us and keep us in all our ways, but would have His Holy Spirit dwell within us, so that body and soul may be thoroughly guarded and kept. The Holy Spirit (2) is also the most *needful* gift. We may be happy without possessing great wealth or honors; but without the Holy Spirit we cannot be truly happy either here or in eternity. Consequently, the Holy Spirit (3) is also the most *blessed* gift. He is the earnest of our inheritance and the seal of our sonship, through whom we are assured that we are the children of God and heirs of everlasting life. We need Him sorely in all times of sadness, tribulation, and temptation; for in such times He gives us the assurance that we are still under grace. And when we know not what we should pray for as we ought, He Himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

This glorious, needful, and blessed gift (4) God will give to all who ask Him. We have no such promise of God with regard to bodily and

earthly things, because these are not always good for us; but the gift of His Holy Spirit God will never refuse. (5) A devout Christian purifies his heart from the love of the world and of sin, that the good and pure Spirit of God may dwell in him.

PRAYER FOR PENTECOST.

I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses. O dearest Jesus, this promise Thou didst fulfill upon the day of Pentecost, when Thou didst pour out Thy Spirit abundantly upon the apostles, and thus fit them for their work of proclaiming grace, the forgiveness of sins through Thy blood, and everlasting salvation to all nations. Faithful Saviour! Bestow upon me also this glorious gift.

O blessed Holy Spirit! Shed Thyself abundantly over me, as Thou didst shed Thyself in flames of fire upon the Apostles. Enlighten me unto life eternal. Illumine my understanding, that I may know Jesus Christ. Sanctify my will, that I may desire nothing but what is pleasing to Thee. As the apostles were filled with power from on high, so do Thou, O Spirit of

Power, confirm my faith, and give me courage and strength to walk in Thy ways, to overcome the world, to resist sin, and to live as a true child of God. Make me, O blessed Rain, fruitful unto all good works; revive me in the heat of temptation; and grant that I may bring forth abundantly in my life the fruits of faith.

O Spirit of grace and of prayer! give me the comfort and joy of knowing that I stand in the grace of God. Pray with me and in me; teach me to pray fervently; encourage me to devotion and the praise of God. Rest upon me, Thou Spirit of Wisdom, that I may know and do what is pleasing to God. Rest upon me, Thou Spirit of Understanding, that I may walk in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. Guard my understanding against error; dispel from it all the darkness of ignorance and selfishness; and kindle within me the light of Thy grace, that I may daily increase in Thy love and knowledge. Rest upon me, Thou Spirit of the Fear of God; plant holy fear within my heart, that I may never again consciously and wilfully commit sin. Rest upon me, Thou Spirit of Love, and take from my heart all anger, stubbornness, envy, malice, and revenge.

Be my Comforter in affliction and sorrow, when the floods threaten to overwhelm me and the waves roll over my head. Be my Strength

when I am weak : help me to subdue the lusts of the flesh ; and let faith, love, humility, hope, and patience increase in me. Be my Guide to lead me always in the right way, that I may not stumble nor fall nor transgress the commands of God. Be my Teacher, to lead me into all truth, and to glorify Jesus in me. O Thou pure Water, cleanse me from all evil. Let me increase in all that is good, and bring forth fruit abundantly. Grant, that by Thy Strength I may truly call Jesus Lord, and may own Him as my Jesus, my Redeemer, my Saviour, the ground of my salvation.

Behold, O Thou Light of my soul, how I am surrounded in this world with temptations ; for many deceivers have gone forth. Guard me, lest I stray from Thee. Cause me to know the way in which I should walk ; for I lift up my soul unto Thee. If I follow my own ways, I shall err ; but if Thou leadest me, I shall walk in the way of Thy statutes.

O blessed Holy Spirit, if I have hitherto grieved Thee, I sincerely repent. Behold, my heart is open for Thee ; I beseech Thee, enter in, and endow it with the rich gifts of Thy grace. Fill it with all Christian virtues. Establish and confirm me in the faith. Do Thou, who hast begun a good work in me, perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. O create in me a

clean heart. Destroy in me all evil habits and ways, and all dominion of sin over me. Take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart that is hallowed and changed by Thy grace. Dwell within me. Let my heart be Thy temple and habitation. Then shall I have the earnest of my inheritance and of my divine sonship, and shall know for a certainty that eternal salvation is mine.

Abide with me, O Holy Spirit, in every time of need and in the hour of death. Speak in me, crying, Abba, Father. Give me a glimpse of the bliss and a foretaste of the eternal joy which shall be mine, when I have finished the fight and receive the crown, when the sorrows of earth shall give place to the happiness of heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Holy Ghost, with light divine
Shine upon this heart of mine!
Chase the shades of night away,
Turn the darkness into day.

Let me see my Saviour's face,
Let me all His beauties trace;
Show those glorious truths to me,
Which are only known to Thee.

Holy Ghost, with power divine,
Cleanse this guilty heart of mine:

In Thy mercy pity me,
From sin's bondage set me free.

Holy Ghost, with joy divine,
Cheer this saddened heart of mine;
Yield a sacred, settled peace,
Let it grow and still increase.

Holy Spirit, all divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down every idol throne,
Reign supreme, and reign alone.

See, to Thee I yield my heart;
Shed Thy life through every part.
A pure temple I would be,
Wholly dedicate to Thee.

—*Andrew Reed, 1817. a.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR PENTECOST.

“Come, Holy Spirit, Come! Let Thy bright beams arise. Dispel the sorrow from my mind, the darkness from my eyes. Revive my drooping faith; my doubts and fears remove; and kindle in my breast the flame of never-dying love. Convince me of my sin, then lead to Jesus’ blood; and to my wondering view reveal the secret love of God. ’Tis Thine to cleanse the heart, to sanctify the soul, to pour fresh life on every part, and new create the whole. Dwell, therefore, in my heart, my mind from bondage free; then shall I

know and praise and love the Father, Son, and Thee."

With these words, O Comforter in sorrow, Thou blessed Holy Spirit, I pray for Thy gracious indwelling and Thy heavenly gifts before I retire to rest; for I have been convinced to-day, how willingly Thou buildest a tabernacle among men. Make my heart, which longs for Thee, Thy tabernacle. Glorify Jesus in my soul, that I may love and cling to Him, and thus obtain power to become a child of God and a temple of God. Let me appreciate Christ's person and work, and the grace which He has acquired for me, so that I may accept Him as my only Redeemer, and may seek and find forgiveness in His name. Let His virtues and holy conversation, which are meant for my imitation, be manifest in me. Let His glory,—His meekness, holiness, purity, love, sincerity and truth,—be reflected in me, and shine as a bright light in all my conduct. Let me behold the majesty and glory which, in His state of humiliation, He voluntarily laid aside for my sake, but which He resumed after the work of redemption was completed, and with which He is clothed as He now sits at the right hand of His heavenly Father; so that I may see in Him the only Mediator between God and myself, and may pray to Him and serve Him.

If Thou wilt glorify Jesus in me, I shall be united with Him by faith, be conformed to His image by fellowship with Him, and, following Him, be led to the Jerusalem above. O Spirit of Grace, help me to obtain this blessedness. Work in me a true and living faith; perform and finish in me all that I need in order to attain Christ's image and to become His own. Hear my cry, give ear to my supplications, accept my prayer, and grant me the grace which I seek.

Then, when Thou hast glorified Jesus in me, let me bear witness of Him, as the apostles did after Thou wast poured out upon them abundantly. Let me bear witness of Him in my entire life, by obedience to His Word and will. Let me receive Him into my heart, acknowledge Him as the true Messiah and God, believe in Him, and serve Him. Let me testify of Him with my mouth, praise Him in secret and in public, and always confess Him, so that He also may confess me before His heavenly Father. Let me bear witness of Him also in my sufferings. Let me be cheerful, hope and trust in Him, and wait upon Him. Finally, let me bear witness of Him in my death: let me be faithful to Him in that hour, and in faith look for the crown of life at His hands.

If Thou wilt enable me thus constantly to bear witness of my Saviour, then will He confess me, and give me a white stone, and in the stone a new name written. O how happy, how blessed I shall then be! O Spirit of Jesus, grant me this blessedness; I trust in Thee, let me not be ashamed. I surrender myself to Thee. O lead me to heaven, and let me never stray aside into wrong paths. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN MEDITATES UPON THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

MORNING PRAYER FOR TRINITY SUNDAY.

HOLY, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts;
the whole earth is full of His glory.

In these words, as I arise from sleep, I justly praise Thy glorious name, O adorable God, who hast revealed and manifested Thyself as One in Essence, yet distinct in Persons. This day, which Thy goodness has permitted me to see, moves me to reflect upon the great mystery of the Godhead, and to employ it for my profit. O grant me grace to accomplish my purpose! Manifest Thyself to me as my God, that I may be prompted and encouraged to approve myself as Thy obedient creature.

Father of Mercies, Thy hand created me; Thy power fashioned me in my mother's womb, and caused me to see the light of day. Thou hast granted me life and favor, and Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. O let not Thy faithfulness toward me cease, but deal with me continually as a loving Father. Let me, however, always conduct myself toward Thee with child-like humility and reverence, and thus by Thy grace reach the highest degree of perfection.

Only begotten Son of the Highest, Jesus Christ, my Mediator and Saviour! cease not to hold Thy merit and blood before Thy Father, whenever, by reason of His just anger against my transgressions, misdeeds, and sins, He would condemn and cast me from Him. Cease not, O eternal Highpriest, to intercede for me, and to gladden me with Thy heavenly blessing. Cease not Thy work in me, and grow not weary of calling me to repentance, till Thy image is formed in me and my heart has become Thy dwelling. Let none of Thy redeemed ones be lost. Let me have life in Thee, and have it more abundantly.

Spirit of Grace! have mercy upon me, and be not far from me with Thy gifts. When I mourn, comfort and revive my poor soul. When I stumble, hold me up and help me upon

my feet. When I stray, lead me back to the right way. When I pray, pray with me: teach me how to pray, and give to my weak words power to move my Father in heaven, to touch His heart with compassion, and to bring me help from Him.

O Triune God! deal with me thus; then will I praise Thy name, spread abroad Thy glory, live according to Thy will, and at last, at Thy call, leave this wretched world with joy, and look for the gracious reward of Thy mercy for my faithfulness.

If my depraved reason would awake in me all manner of doubts, as if Thou, O Hidden God, who dwellest in the light which no man approacheth unto, couldest not be one in Essence and yet three in Persons; then let me take my reason captive to the obedience of faith, and refuse to listen to its objections. Strengthen my faith in Thee, and let me cling so firmly to Thy revelations and testimonies, that the gates of hell may not be able to prevail against me nor rob me of my faith. If my indolent flesh and blood be unwilling to follow Thee and to live according to Thy will, then give me, from Thy inexhaustible divine fulness, power and ability to subject myself to Thee, and to obey Thee in all my life.

Let me show my faith by my works, adding to my faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. Thus let me live before Thee in holiness and righteousness, and finally pass from faith to sight. Then, when I shall see Thee face to face, I shall, with all the elect, praise Thee forever, even as I now already praise Thy holy name. Amen.

MEDITATION FOR TRINITY SUNDAY.

I. John 5: 7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

When a devout person wishes to reflect upon the mystery of the Holy Trinity, he must do as one would do when he desires the benefit and use of the light of the sun. If he looks upon the sun with unshaded eyes, he blinds himself, and sees nothing but darkness. But if he keeps his eyes turned away from the sun, he sees by its light everything that he needs to see.

The mystery of the Holy Trinity (1) is incomprehensible to our reason. We cannot understand how one Divine Being should be Three Persons. For this reason many have taken offense at this doctrine, and believe with the

Jews that there is but one person. But (2) it is nevertheless a mystery clearly taught by the Scriptures, and is contained in many of the choicest passages of the Old and New Testaments. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, the Three Persons of the Trinity were present (Matt. 3:17). The works and attributes of the Triune God are clearly described. The devout Christian believes these words of life till, in the eternal world, faith shall give way to sight.

In the meantime (3) he prays to the Triune God in true humility of heart. He thanks his Creator for all the benefits bestowed upon body and soul. He thanks his Redeemer for freeing him from death, from sin, from the devil, and from the power of hell. He surrenders his heart and entire life to the Sanctifier. He exerts himself to obey the Triune God, and is confident that in the next world he shall see what he here believes. For blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed.

PRAYER ON TRINITY SUNDAY.

Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory. With these words, O Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I join in the song of the seraphim and cherubim, and sing Thy power and majesty and

glory. O Thou self-existent, unfathomable, and incomprehensible Being! My faith clings firmly and alone to Thy Holy Word, in which Thou hast gloriously revealed Thyself. This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.

Father of all grace and mercy, who hast made Thyself known to me as my Father! I adore Thee, I honor and praise Thee. Thou art not only from all eternity the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but of Thee the whole family in heaven and earth is named. As a gracious and loving Father Thou hast hitherto nourished, sustained, guarded, and preserved me; yea, Thou dost at this very hour nourish, sustain, and preserve me. O merciful Father, look in mercy and compassion upon Thy child.

Lord Jesus, Son of God! From Thy holy Word I have learned to know Thee as the second Person of the Holy Trinity, begotten of the Father from all eternity, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, Begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father. I have learned to know Thee as my Brother and Kinsman, who tookest upon Thyself our human nature in order to redeem me and all men from sin, death, the devil, and hell. Therefore I rejoice in Thee, and worship Thee. Thou art my Righteousness, my Redeemer, my Intercessor.

my Highpriest, my Throne of Grace, my Mediator, my Immanuel, my Saviour, my Shepherd. In Thee I have life, and have it more abundantly. Thou art the Paschal Lamb, who gavest Thyself for my sins. Through Thee I have access to grace and life. In Thee I am saved here in time and there in eternity.

Blessed Holy Spirit! Thou hast revealed Thyself in Thy Word as the Third Person of the Godhead, who proceedest from the Father and the Son, who art the Spirit of the Father and the Son, of one substance and of equal majesty and glory with the Father and the Son. Thou hast regenerated me in Holy Baptism. Through Thee I have been brought to grace, to light, and to the life that is of God. Thou art my Sanctifier, who dost enlighten, sanctify, and preserve me in the true faith. Thou dost comfort me in all times of suffering, cheer me in sadness, and revive me in tribulation. O Thou Spirit of grace and of prayer! seal in me the consolation, that I am in a state of grace. Bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God. Arouse me to prayer, make me devout in prayer, and give me joyfulness after prayer.

O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, the Triune God, our Maker: for we are His people and the sheep of His pasture. How unsearchable are Thy judg-

ments, and Thy ways past finding out! Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be praise and honor and glory for evermore. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after another; none is greater or less than another. But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord. And yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

O Triune God and Lord! Let me continually grow and increase in this knowledge of Thee. Grant that I may apprehend Thee by faith, and hold fast Thy holy Word as my rule of faith and life. And what I cannot comprehend, help me nevertheless to believe from the heart, till faith shall be changed to sight. Meanwhile, my Father, graciously spread Thy wings over me, and bless me. O Jesus, wash me in Thy precious blood, and bless me; justify and save me. Lord God the Holy Ghost, enlighten me, and

bless me, that I may walk in Thy light, and be enabled in Thy light to behold the blessed light of heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

With joy our voices we unite,
And lift our hearts above,
To God, the God of power and might,
To God, whose name is Love.

To Him, who us, and earth, and skies,
With all their armies made,
From us, from all, let anthems rise,
To God the Father paid.

To Him, whose death for all mankind,
For us, redemption won,
By us, by all, be songs combined,
In praise to God the Son.

To Him, who us and all His fold
With sanctity arrays,
To God, from all His saints enrolled,
The Holy Ghost, be praise.

To God, whose name His Word reveals,
Whom all His saints confess,
Whose grace His faithful promise seals,
To save, to cleanse, to bless:

To God, from whom all blessings flow,
Eternal One in Three,
From all His saints, above, below,
Eternal glory be.

—*Richard Mant. 1837. a.*

EVENING PRAYER FOR TRINITY SUNDAY.

O Holy Triune God! Ere I seek my bed, I come once more before Thy throne, filled with joy and gladness, because to-day I have heard and believed the blessed tidings, that Thou dost come and dwell in the hearts of those who love Thee. This I regard as the greatest honor which can be conferred upon a reasoning creature of Thine. Therefore my soul is glad and leaps for joy. The world, indeed, judges otherwise, and imagines that those are wretched beings who yield their heart for Thy habitation, and who must not only deny themselves the pleasures of the world, but spend their days in a constant conflict and strife, in order that no sin, not even the smallest, may gain dominion over them. But I know and am persuaded that it is well with the righteous, and that a great glory and salvation are prepared for them.

I therefore long for Thy indwelling most fervently. Come, O Triune God, into my soul, and dwell in me. Quicken and govern me. Make of me a new creature. Let me no longer live unto myself, but unto Him that died and rose again for me. I know that this indwelling is no mere fancy such as the world imagines it to be. Nor is it merely a bestowal of Thy gifts; and still less is it a deification of man. But Thou comest

Thyself as God and dwellest in us, not simply in the manner in which Thou art present with all the ungodly, but in a special, gracious manner, so that we are intimately united with Thee as the branch with the vine, as the head with the members, as the soul with the body. What unspeakable grace! How Thou dost ennoble those who are Thine, O God, in thus making them partakers of Thy Spirit and power! When Thou hast thus come into my soul, then it is no longer I that live; but Thou livest in me, Thou speakest through me, Thou walkest and workest in me.

Let me therefore continually go in Thy strength, that it may always be said of me: Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men; know ye not that Jesus Christ dwelleth in you? This is the source of true blessedness, — the blessedness in which I delight, and which I anxiously desire. A bright light now arises within me, revealing my sins and Thy grace, and urging me to flee the former and seek the latter. New life comes to me with Thee. Now I am no longer weak and carried away by every sin, but can do all things through Thee who strengthenest me. Now I have comfort in every time of sorrow, and consolation under all the vicissitudes and trials of life. How happy I am, therefore, even here in this world! And how blessed I shall

be yonder in eternity, living in Thy fellowship and beholding Thee as Thou art! O grant me this in mercy. Let me to-day yet enter upon this blessed state. Let me remain in it and grow. Let me never again drive Thee from me, but remain united with Thee, till in eternity I shall behold Thee for evermore. Amen.

THE CHRISTIAN, ON ST. MICHAEL'S DAY,
MEDITATES UPON THE GUARDIAN-
SHIP OF THE HOLY ANGELS.

MEDITATION.

Heb. 1: 14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

THE holy angels were created by God for His service and glory, and they continually stand around His throne and do His will. If a great king were to lend His body-guard and servants to any one, it would be regarded as a token of great love and favor. (1) Consequently, true Christians thank God for this particular grace; namely, that He has not only given Himself with all His blessings and gifts for their enjoyment, and sent Jesus Christ for the salvation of their souls, and the Holy Ghost to be their Comforter and Guide, but that He

also has given them the holy angels to keep guard over them. Christians do not (2) drive the angels away by wilful sin, but cause them to rejoice over their repentance and godly conversation.

Christians also (3) seek on earth to imitate the good example of the angels in thanking, praising, and serving God. Whoever here on earth remains a devil, that is to say, an obstinate, stiffnecked, unconverted man and brazen sinner till his death, cannot after death become like the angels. A true Christian seeks, therefore, (4) in accordance with the third petition, to do God's will on earth as it is done in heaven, — at least with equal willingness and sincerity. (5) He does not worship the angels; for worship is an honor which he must give to God alone, and not to his fellow-servants (Rev. 19:10). (6) In this condition of faith, of love, of godliness, and of the fear of God, the Christian remains steadfast to his end, knowing that the holy angels will not only guard him from harm in the path of duty, but that they will also stand around his death-bed, and will, when he has breathed his last, carry his soul into Abraham's bosom.

PRAYER FOR ST. MICHAEL'S DAY.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them. O loving and merciful God! how I rejoice that Thou hast given me Thy angels for my protection and defence! Lord, Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him? If it be a high honor for a humble man to receive a king's body-guard and servants to protect him, how much higher an honor it is for us poor human beings to receive the holy angels to accompany and guard us on our way!

O Thou God of love! In Thine unspeakable goodness Thou hast not only given us all visible creatures, heaven, earth, sun, air, sea, and the fruits of the earth, but hast ordained that Thy invisible creatures, the holy angels, should be our ministers, and preserve us from harm. Thou knowest, O loving Father, how Thy children on earth are surrounded by danger and sorrows; for this reason Thou hast given them guardians to watch over and shield them by day and by night. Thou knowest how Thy children are perpetually beset by powerful foes, by the princes of darkness, by Satan and his hosts; and hence Thou hast provided them with mighty

defenders, who are able to repel those foes and to guard Thy loved ones.

O my God, when weeks, months, and years pass away in succession, leaving me uninjured in body, unharmed in property, and able to go unmolested about my business, must I not ascribe all this to Thy Fatherly faithfulness, love, and mercy, because Thou hast kept and preserved me through Thy ministering spirits? O how many dangers, of which I was entirely ignorant, hast Thou not warded off through the mighty guardianship of Thy holy angels! Therefore, my God, Thou art worthy of love and praise to all eternity.

I beseech Thee, loving Father, command Thy angels henceforth also to guard me, Thine own. As the hosts of God met and accompanied Jacob when he was threatened with the greatest danger at the hands of his brother Esau, so let them ward off all danger and harm from me. Surround my house with a guard of angels, like the house of Job; let them be with me in the hour of need, as with Daniel; let them turn away all harm from me, as they turned away the flames from the three men in the fiery furnace; let them guard my daily supply of food, as they brought food and water to Elijah; let them encamp round about me, and accompany and assist me in my journeys, as they did Tobias.

O merciful God, grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that I may not grieve Thy holy angels by my sins, nor drive them from me by reckless living. Let me not force them to forsake me and to flee from my wickedness. Let me imitate them in Thy service, praise, and obedience here in this life, that I may become like them in the joyful eternity. Henceforth my motto shall be, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. My God, let Thy holy angels be with me in death, carry my soul into Abraham's bosom, and accompany me to glory. Let me remain there forever in their fellowship and company, rejoice with them over Thy glory and majesty, join with them in the refrain, Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God of Hosts, and thank and praise Thee for this, as well as for all other blessings of Thy grace, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN.

10s.

Stars of the morning, so gloriously bright,
Filled with celestial splendor and light,
These that, where night never followeth day,
Raise the "Thrice Holy" song ever and aye:

These are Thy ministers, these dost Thou own,
God of Sabaoth, the nearest Thy throne;
These are Thy messengers, these dost Thou send,
Help of the helpless ones! man to defend.

These keep the guard amid Salem's dear bowers,
Thrones, Principalities, Virtues, and Powers,
Where, with the living Ones, mystical Four,
Cherubim, Seraphim bow and adore.

Still let them succor us; still let them fight,
Lord of angelic hosts, battling for right;
Till, where their anthems they ceaselessly pour,
We with the angels may bow and adore.

—*S. Joseph, the Hymnographer.*
J. M. Neale, Tr. 1862.

BOOK I.

PART III.

PRAYERS FOR VARIOUS SPIRITUAL AND BODILY BENEFITS.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS FOR TEMPORAL, SPIRITUAL, AND ETERNAL BLESSINGS.

Ps. 67: 6, 7. God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.

EVERY one prays for something from God. But when we pray, we should be careful how we pray and for what we pray. The prayers of the majority of men are simply prayers for earthly and transient things, which often are not a blessing but a curse. The true Christian prays, indeed, (1) for bodily blessings also, such as health, prosperity, food, the warding off of danger, help in need, support in sufferings, and deliverance out of trouble. Such prayers are acceptable to God, because He has promised in His word to give us these things.

But the true Christian does not stop at these things; for they are the lesser blessings which

are often bestowed even without our prayer. On the contrary (2) he prays especially for spiritual blessings: for the Holy Spirit, for a godly heart, and for the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost (Rom. 14:17). He prays for enlightenment, growth in goodness, sanctification, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit; for these are the principal things which he can ask or receive of God. And if these are bestowed upon him, he regards them as his greatest treasure.

The true Christian prays (3) also for things eternal, for a happy end, for a blessed departure from this world, and for entrance into the bliss of heaven, that he may behold God face to face, and that, clothed with white robes and his conflict over, he may rejoice in God forever. The believer must pray for spiritual and heavenly things, if he would pray aright and in a manner acceptable to God. (4) But at the same time he must be careful to live a blameless Christian life, so that God may be able to bestow these spiritual and heavenly blessings upon him; for they cannot be received by an unregenerate and wicked person.

PRAYER.

O gracious and bountiful God, how great and glorious, how rich and mighty art Thou! Thou possessest all things, and canst bestow all things.

Behold, I, Thy child, come to Thee, and pray for Thy gifts. Thou knowest that I brought nothing into this world, and that of myself I have nothing but my sinfulness. Every good thing I possess has come from Thee; for every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. Yea, what hast thou, O man, that Thou didst not receive?

O my God and Father, make me rich in soul: give me Thy Holy Spirit and a God-fearing heart; convert and enlighten me, that I may become a new man and a true Christian. Help me to fight and work, so that I may subdue all evil lusts, lay aside all bad habits, separate myself from the world, and present my body and soul a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Thee. Behold, O God, how many are the dangers and temptations to which I am exposed in this world. Do Thou guide me by Thy power, that I may not be led astray nor turned aside from Thee. Dwell in my soul, control my heart, and grant me grace to be a living member of the body of my Jesus, and a new creature; then shall I be rich enough, honored enough, and happy enough in this world.

Provide for me also, O gracious God and Father, in earthly things. Thou knowest what I need, Thou seest what I lack. Give me nothing according to my will, but all according to Thine.

If health is good for me, then give me a healthy body, that I may all the better perform the duties of my calling. Provide me with food and clothing; for Thou knowest that without these I cannot live. Be with me in all my ways, and guard me against harm. Add Thy blessing to my labor; for what Thou blessest is blessed indeed. Thou hast placed me in the world; Thou wilt also know how to sustain and provide for me. I cast all my burdens and cares upon Thee. O God, do Thou care for Thy child and preserve me; let me in future abundantly enjoy Thy Fatherly faithfulness and grace.

But since Thou, O God, hast not created me simply for the sake of this earthly life, I hope for still greater blessings at Thy hands. If I had nothing to hope from Thee but those gifts which concern my earthly welfare, then would I be the most wretched of men. Therefore, my Father, grant me also the heavenly gifts. Keep me in the faith until the end of my life; let me die in Christ; and take my soul unto Thyself into everlasting joy. If it be possible in accordance with Thy will, let me die while in the possession of my reason, and bring me, after my departure from this world, to the company of the elect in heaven, that I may be crowned, transformed, and clothed with robes of white, behold Thy face, and rejoice in Thee forever.

O my God, hear the voice of my supplications, and do not withhold what I ask. Of earthly gifts give me such as please Thee and are salutary for me; in spiritual things grant me a rich measure of Thy grace; and bring me at last to the gathering of the saints in light. Let me be united with Thee here in faith and love, and united with Thee in heaven for evermore. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

The Lord my Shepherd is,
I shall be well supplied:
Since He is mine and I am His,
What can I want beside?

He leads me to the place
Where heavenly pasture grows,
Where living waters gently pass,
And full salvation flows.

If e'er I go astray,
He doth my soul reclaim,
And guides me in His own right way,
For His most holy Name.

While He affords His aid,
I cannot yield to fear:
Though I should walk through death's dark
shade,
My Shepherd's with me there.

The bounties of Thy love
Shall crown my following days;
Nor from Thy house will I remove,
Nor cease to speak Thy praise.

—Watts, 1719.

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD FOR HIS HEALTH.

MEDITATION.

Ecclesiasticus 30: 14-16. Better is the poor, being sound and strong of constitution, than a rich man that is afflicted in his body. Health and good estate of body are above all gold, and a strong body above infinite wealth. There is no riches above a sound body, and no joy above the joy of the heart.

GOD bestows upon men diverse gifts, spiritual and bodily. Among the bodily gifts, one of the most precious is health. A healthy man is a happy man, provided he be at the same time godly. But he is the most unhappy of men, if he be ungodly. A healthy man is happy because he can serve God and his neighbor unhindered, follow his calling, and do much good. But if with all his health a man is not godly, he abuses this noble gift outrageously in the service of sin, shame and wickedness. O how salutary it would be for many a one to be lame, dumb, and blind, or oppressed with pain, so that he might not with his feet, his tongue,

his eyes, and his body perpetrate so much wickedness. Such an abuse of the healthy members of the body involves a heavy responsibility and severe punishment.

A Christian recognizes the blessing of health. Therefore (1) when he looks upon the healthy members of his body, he gives God thanks for them. (2) He employs his health for the purpose of serving God, reverently attending divine worship in God's house, and growing in true religion. (3) He employs it in the service of his fellow-men. (4) He employs it in faithfully and honestly fulfilling the duties of his calling. (5) He recognizes that his health may fail, and that in a moment, if it be God's will, pain, sickness, lameness, or ill-health may come upon him. (6) Therefore he does not abuse his health by indulgence in wilful sin, presumption, and malice; lest, if sickness and pain come, his conscience should say to him: This is God's punishment for the abuse of thy health. For God frequently sends bodily disease upon those who have abused their health by living in sin, and thus puts a check upon their transgressions. (7) A pious Christian prays diligently in days of health, because he does not know whether he will have strength to pray when sickness comes. Thus he employs his health to good purpose.

PRAYER.

O Thou gracious and merciful God! How great is Thy love and goodness, in that Thou dost not only graciously preserve me but dost permit me to begin and complete one year after another in good health. My God, I acknowledge that this is one of the good gifts which come down from above, from Thee, the Father of lights. Lord, Lord, who am I, that Thou shouldest show such mercy to me? Daily I see people who are sickly, miserable, and weak. I hear many complain that they must spend their life in great pain and in tedious sickness upon their beds; and these persons are perhaps much more God-fearing and pious, and pray more devoutly, than I. And yet to me Thou dost grant good health and strength.

O Lord, I am not worthy of all the mercies which Thou hast hitherto bestowed upon me, and which Thou dost still bestow. Grant, O God, that I may not abuse this noble gift of health by wantonness, sinful pleasure, pride, and insolence, but may recognize that Thou wouldest encourage me by it to thankfulness and piety. Help me throughout all my future life to employ my health for Thy honor and glory, to the good of my neighbor, and to the fulfilment of the duties of my station. If it be Thy will, preserve my

health and my soundness of limb, so that I may be unhampered and regular in my attendance at Thy house, and may sing hymns of thanksgiving and praise in Thy temple. Grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may sanctify my sound limbs to Thy service, and my right mind to growth in the knowledge of Thee. O my God, grant me grace and strength to increase in the inward man, that I may be strong in faith, fervent in spirit, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer, sincere in my love to Thee and my neighbor, Christ-like in life, rejoicing in hope, and peaceful in death. O, sanctify me; bless me. Let Thy good Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet Messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb.

—*William Cowper, 1779.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS GOD TO
SANCTIFY HIS HEART.

MEDITATION.

Heb. 12: 14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

WHEN the believer reflects upon his natural state of condemnation, (1) he remembers that he cannot make himself holy, but that his sanctification is the work of God. Therefore (2) he uses the means which God has ordained for his sanctification. He calls to mind his Baptism, through which the Holy Ghost was shed upon him and took up His abode in his heart; and he inquires carefully whether he has not in his adult years driven the Holy Spirit away again by wilful sin. He knows that the Holy Supper also is a means of grace; therefore, whenever he receives it, he seeks to have his soul and body and all his members sanctified by it. He listens reverently to God's Word, and treasures it in his heart, in order that he may grow in holiness.

Through the power of God and the operation of the Holy Spirit (3) this sanctification is to take place in body and soul. If the soul is sanctified, the whole life must be holy, and all our thoughts and words and deeds must be fashioned according to the demands of holiness. (4) This sanctification is to take place early in life, and not simply in old age or on the death-bed. It is to take place while we are able to pray and to use the means of grace intelligently. (5) This sanctification should be manifest at all times and under all circumstances, when we are in the society of the children of this world as well as on other occasions. We should always show by our conduct, by our words and deeds, that our heart is sanctified, and that in all that we say and do we are governed by the Holy Spirit. Such sanctified souls shall one day enter upon the inheritance of the saints in light.

PRAYER.

O Holy Spirit, I tremble when I hear Thy words: "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy;" and again, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." When I reflect upon these words, and compare them with my unholy heart, my unholy thoughts, my unholy words, my unholy deeds, I am often filled with dismay. I am ashamed of my unbecoming and unholy life. For,

alas, I have followed the promptings of my heart and the customs of the world, and have grieved Thee by sinful words and deeds. O, if none shall see Thy face but those who are holy, how few shall be saved, how many shall be condemned! Help, Lord; for the godly man ceaseth!

O Thou holy God, enlighten me, that I may henceforth follow after holiness of heart and life. O Jesus, make me righteous through Thy righteousness, through Thy merit and blood. O give to me, who am by nature unholy, Thy righteousness, that, clothed with it as with a beauteous robe, I may appear and stand before Thy heavenly Father. Sanctify my life through Thy holy Word. Sanctify my heart, that it may always be occupied with good thoughts. Sanctify my lips, that they may not speak what is unbecoming, unchristian, and wicked. Sanctify my will, that I may desire and do only what is pleasing to Thee. O holy God! Draw me away from the world, and unite me with Thee, so that I may have within me the witness of Thy Holy Spirit that I have been born again as Thy child, and enjoy Thy favor.

But let this sanctification be genuine. Let me not, for example, be holy and seek holiness only in church, or at the Lord's Table, or when I am engaged in holy offices, but be holy and strive after holiness at all times, at all places.

and under all circumstances, even when I must live in the society of the children of this world. Let me, at such times also, speak, live, and act as a child of God, and continue to do so until death, when Thou wilt receive me into the company of the sanctified and elect in eternal light above. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O that the Lord would guide my ways,
To keep His statutes still!
O that my God would grant me grace
To know and do His will!

Order my footsteps by Thy Word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.

Assist my soul, too apt to stray,
A stricter watch to keep;
And should I e'er forget Thy way,
Restore Thy wandering sheep.

Make me to walk in Thy commands;
'Tis a delightful road:
Nor let my head, or heart, or hands,
Offend against my God.

—Watts, 1719. a.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS GOD TO GOVERN AND GUIDE HIM.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 86: 11. Teach me Thy way, O Lord; I will walk in Thy truth: unite my heart to fear Thy name.

THIS earthly life is a journey. We enter upon it at birth, and we end it at death, passing into eternity. It is of the utmost importance on what road we journey. If we walk on the good way of faith and godliness, we shall find it leading us to the glory of heaven. But if we walk on the broad way of unbelief, malice and wickedness, we shall find it leading us to hell and eternal destruction.

When the Christian considers these things, (1) he should picture to his mind the two ways which lie before him, the narrow way which leads to heaven, and the broad way which leads to hell. And he should use all diligence to travel on the way to heaven. (2) But in order that he may enter upon and remain on the narrow way, he should fervently pray that God may govern and guide him. (3) When he has prayed for the guidance and direction of God, he should not look around him to see how the children of this world live, and on what paths they travel; for if he were to follow these, then God's Spirit

would cease to guide him and would depart from him.

Just as a traveler needs a guide to show him the right way, so the Christian (4) needs the Spirit of God to show him the way in which he should walk. For this purpose it is necessary that the Holy Spirit should dwell in our heart, so that it may be said of us: Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? (1 Cor. 3:16). If we have this Guide in us, then our thoughts, our words, our temper, and desires will be regulated by Him. (5) The devout Christian does not rebel against this holy rule, nor resist the Holy Spirit, but permits himself to be led, encouraged, and guided, and is confident that he will be led in safety here in this world and in the world to come. O blessed Guidance! Happy is he who has God for his Guide.

PRAYER.

Lord, Thou hast searched me and known me; Thou art acquainted with all my ways. Thou seest and knowest full well, O God, how earnestly I long to walk in Thy ways, and to live as Thou hast commanded Thy children to live, even as Jesus has given us an example. But alas, I find that only too often I am led aside from the right way by temptations of one kind or another.

Now it is my own evil heart that leads me astray through wicked desires; again, it is the world that incites me to evil by its bad example. If I follow either of them, I anger Thee, my God and Lord, and wound my own conscience. The nearer I approach to the world, the more I recede from Thee.

Therefore I beseech Thee, lead and guide me by Thy counsel. Thou hast said, I will guide thee with Mine eye. Behold me, Lord, and let Thy good Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness. I yield myself entirely into Thy hands. O God, who didst lead Thy people on dry foot through the Red Sea, and bring them unharmed through the wilderness into the Promised Land, lead me through the dangers of this life, through the wilderness and temptations of this world, with a good conscience, to the life eternal. I commit my heart, my mouth, my members, and my whole being unto Thee. Rule my heart and fill it ever with holy thoughts. Rule my members, that I may not stretch out my hands toward that which is forbidden, nor permit my feet to tread the ways of sin and death. Rule my lips and my tongue, that they may not utter curses or shameful, unchristian, and unbecoming words. Rule my whole life, that henceforth I may never intentionally sin against Thee, but may be a true and pious Christian.

O forsake me not if I should, in my weakness, strive against Thee; and do not leave me to the mercy of my own will and guidance. For if I lead myself, I shall be led astray. Give me grace to be circumspect in all my actions; and write Thy holy fear within my heart, that I may conduct my life entirely according to Thy Word and the example of Jesus my Saviour. Amen.

HYMN.

7s. D.

Take my life, and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my hands, and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet, and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee;
Take my voice, and let me sing
Always, only, for my King.

Take my lips, and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee;
Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise;
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will, and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own!

It shall be Thy royal throne;
Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure-store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all, for Thee.

—*Frances R. Havergal, 1874.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS THAT TRUE
LOVE TO GOD MAY BE ENKIN-
DLED IN HIS HEART.

MEDITATION.

I. John 4: 16, 19. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. We love Him, because He first loved us.

GOD is love; and because He is love, He desires that all His children, the believers, shall dwell in true love. Love is the bond that intimately unites God and our heart, and also unites our heart with our neighbor's.

Therefore the devout Christian (1) prays that God may fill his heart with holy love. For this is one of the good and perfect gifts which come down from above. (2) He must not despise the means through which the love of God is to be awakened and strengthened in him, namely, the devout hearing and heeding of God's Word and the worthy use of the Holy Supper. (3) If he

abides in the love of God, he must give evidence of that fact by holy Christian conduct, by becoming speech, and by works which please God. For love is like a fire: its flames and smoke cannot be hidden.

He must be careful, however, that he may not, like Demas, return to the love of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. Out of love to God he should avoid the world's friendship and society, because these would draw him away from the love of God. (5) He should abide in this holy love to the end, and die in it. (6) This love of God should increase with each succeeding year. It is something to be heartily ashamed of, to have spent twenty, thirty, or forty years in the lust and love of the world, and thus to have forgotten the love of God. And the Christian, when God has opened his eyes, should seek to make amends for such misconduct by all the more fervent, ardent and faithful love, and should abide in such love until death.

PRAYER.

O loving and gracious God! Thou alone art worthy to be loved. Thee and Thee alone I ought to love with all my heart and with all my soul and with all my strength. O, I acknowledge and confess unto Thee with heart-felt sor-

row, that not only has my love to Thee, my Creator and loving Father, to Jesus, my Redeemer and Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit, my Instructor and Guide, been extinguished by my inheritance of original sin; but that I have not always permitted the voice and operations of Thy grace and the promptings of the Holy Spirit to enkindle in my heart again true love to Thee.

But I beseech Thee, change my heart; cleanse it from all love of the world and of sin, and let these words resound in my ears: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Destroy in me all love for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, to which I am, alas, by nature inclined; and enkindle in me by Thy Holy Spirit a pure and true love for Thee. Let me love Thee as the highest good for Thine own sake alone, and flee all vain things.

If I would be a true child of God, I must banish the love of sin and the world and self from my heart, and love Thee above all things. Therefore, O God, I come and beseech Thee: Grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may plant this noble, necessary, and Christian grace in my heart. By His power I will love Thee, O God, sincerely and faithfully. My soul shall think of Thee, my lips shall speak of Thee; Thou

shalt be dearer to me than the world and all its joys, dearer than all earthly fortune and splendor, yea, than all men. Out of love to Thee I will cease from wilful sin, shun the society of wicked persons, endeavor to lead a truly pious life, and regulate my actions solely by Thy wish and will. Thee will I honor and fear; Thee will I serve, follow, and obey.

O gracious God! Let the flame of this love burn brighter and brighter within me, so that I may love Thee not only for a few days, weeks, or years, but continue and increase in Thy love to the end of my days. When for love of Thee I am called upon to suffer, give me the needed courage, and strengthen me by Thy grace. Let love bind me to Thee in time and eternity. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers;
Kindle a flame of sacred love
In these cold hearts of ours.

Look how we grovel here below,
Fond of these trifling toys;
Our souls, how heavily they go
To reach eternal joys.

Dear Lord, and shall we ever live
At this poor dying rate?
Our love so faint, so cold to Thee,
And Thine to us so great?

Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Thy quickening powers.
Come, shed abroad a Saviour's love,
And that shall kindle ours.

—Watts, 1709. a.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS GOD TO IM-
PLANT THE LOVE OF HIS
NEIGHBOR IN HIS
HEART.

MEDITATION.

I. John 4: 20, 21. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

“**A** NEW commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.” With these words Christ describes the mark of His true disciples (John 13:34, 35); they are to be known by their love for their neighbor. No one should imagine that he is abiding in the love of God, if he hates his fellow-man.

Our neighbor is first (1) our friend, our benefactor, our relative. To love these is to fulfill a duty, but does not constitute an exclusively Christian virtue; for the unbelieving heathen also love their friends, benefactors, and relatives, when these do not do anything to injure them.

But (2) our fellow-citizens, strangers, and even those persons who envy us, take advantage of us, and hate us, are our neighbors also. It is particularly in the case of these last, that the love of the Christian is to be manifested. He should show his love not only by not wishing them any harm, not reviling them, and not returning evil for evil, but also by wishing them all that is good, acting kindly toward them, and loving them as he loves himself. All bitterness, revengefulness, hatred, and malice against our foes is to be banished from our heart. We are to show by our words and deeds that we bear no ill-will or hatred, but feel kindly disposed toward them. We are to do in deed and in truth as Jesus commands: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 5:44, 45.)

PRAYER.

O gracious God! Who in Thy fervent love toward us dost richly bless us in body and soul, and who hast commanded us to love our neighbor with a love like Thine! I confess to Thee, that my heart has not yet permitted itself to be brought to such true and sincere love for my neighbor. According to Thy commandment I should love my neighbor as myself. When Thou sendest him fortune, health, and prosperity, I should rejoice, just as I would if Thou hadst sent them to me. I ought sincerely to love the enemy who hates, reviles, persecutes, and oppresses me. I ought to pray for him, wish him well, and beseech Thee to bless him in body and soul.

But, O omniscient God, Thou knowest how far my heart is removed from the fulfilment of these duties. Alas! when Thou bestowest good fortune, honors, or benefits upon my neighbor and not upon me, I often look on with envy because Thou art so kind to him. O all-knowing God, Thou seest how listless and weak are my prayers for my enemies. I either forget them entirely when I pray, or, if I think of them because Thy Spirit so often reminds me of my duty, I pray for them in a very few words. O my God and Father; I recognize in these things the misery

and depravity in which I still lie, and perceive that I am not yet such a disciple of Christ as I ought to be. For true disciples are to be known by their love, not only to their good friends and benefactors, but also to those who envy, hate and persecute them.

I pray Thee therefore, change my revengeful and rebellious heart, so that by Thy grace I may heartily and honestly love my neighbor as myself. Grant me grace to rejoice in his good fortune, and not to be sorrowful or envious because Thou dost not at the same time send similar good fortune to me. Preserve me from all deceitfulness toward him. Let me not be friendly toward him in word and hostile in heart. Let me not betray him with a Judas' kiss, but be honest and sincere in my dealings with him. And should I be obliged to suffer persecution, abuse, and injury at the hands of enemies, give me strength to bear these things with meekness, and not to return evil for evil or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing, and wishing them all manner of good.

O Lord God! Thou seest how hard it is for flesh and blood to fulfil this duty. But by Thy grace and help it can be done. Grant that I may always bear in mind the infinite love with which Thou, O heavenly Father, didst love us men when we were yet Thine enemies. Let me

always keep in view the love of Jesus, who prayed for His enemies and did good to them. Engrave in my heart the merciful love of the Holy Spirit, who wearies not of working on my rebellious heart and knocking at its door, that I may be moved to a true love for my neighbor, and thus give evidence that I am a genuine disciple of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M

How shall we show our love to Thee,
Thou loving God most High,
But loving this Thy family,
For which Thou deignedst to die?

If Thou for me such love didst bear,
Shall I not love again?
For all are objects of Thy care;
Thy love doth all sustain.

If we have love for Thee in heaven,
'Tis seen by love on earth:
Love only, love which God hath given,
Doth prove our heavenly birth.

For all we know of God above,
And of His saints below,
And all we know of heaven, is love,
And all we need to know.

Love is of life the only sign,
Love is our vital breath;

Love only shows the child divine,
Love only conquers death.

Whate'er we do, where'er we go,
Let love our sonship prove:
Our lives the fire celestial show,
Our thoughts and words be love.

O deign to send the love of Thee
From highest heaven above;
For then 'our life Thy praise shall be,
When all our life is love.

With praise to Thee our strains began,
With love to Thee shall end;
The love of Thee, and love of man,
From heaven O deign to send.

—Isaac Williams, 1842. a.

THE CHRISTIAN RECOGNIZES THAT GOD IS THE HIGHEST GOOD.

Ps. 73: 25, 26. Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength
of my heart and my portion forever.

IN every age it has been men's desire to possess the highest good; but the majority of them have failed to recognize of what it consists. The highest good must be permanent and perfect, and able to strengthen and comfort us

in suffering and death, in fortune and misfortune.

According to this description, the highest good cannot be (1) wealth, though many people have regarded and still regard this as their highest good. For wealth parts from us at death, and cannot comfort us then. (2) It cannot be honor and prosperity; for how often does not the man who has been honored fall into disgrace and contempt, and the man who has been prosperous, into adversity and misery! (3) Wisdom and skill have indeed this advantage over other earthly possessions, that others cannot rob us of them; but they vanish at death.

For this reason the devout Christian seeks a true and permanent good, which is found in (4) God alone. If he has God, he has all things; the highest honor, the greatest wealth, the greatest wisdom, in time and eternity. God gladdens the heart in periods of happiness, sustains us under the cross, refreshes us in death, and remains united with us throughout eternity. We obtain this good (5) through prayer, through devout hearing of the divine Word, through diligent meditation upon that Word, and through the grace of the Holy Spirit. But we must see to it (6) that we do not drive God away from us again, nor seek our highest good in the love of the world, vanity, and sinful pleasures.

PRAYER.

O gracious God! How glorious, how lovely, how perfect art Thou! To have Thee is to have all things, to know all things, to be able to do all things, yea, to possess the highest, best, and most excellent good! O do Thou engrave this truth deeply in my heart, that I may seek Thee alone, and find Thee. O preserve my heart from the folly of the worldlings, who imagine that in the possession of earthly honors or riches or pleasures or magnificence they have attained the highest good. How mistaken they are! These possessions desert them at death, follow them not into eternity, and comfort them not in their last hour, but let them pass into eternity naked and bare, yea, without God.

Grant, therefore, that I may carefully distinguish the true good from the transient. O Triune God, Thou alone art my highest, dearest, truest good. Thou desirest to give Thyself to me, and to unite Thyself with me. O bind my soul to Thee in time and eternity. Though moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through and steal, and misfortunes destroy the treasures of earth, my God remains mine as my highest good. With Thee I go out and in; with Thee I journey from place to place; with Thee I lie down to rest; with Thee I enter upon a happy

eternity. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee. If I have Thee, I have the true life, the greatest riches, the true glory, the highest good. I beseech Thee, therefore, live in me, dwell in me, abide with me. Then shall I have a Helper under crosses and trials, a support in need, the greatest wealth in the midst of poverty, the best comfort in sickness, the sweetest consolation in my last hour. Then, when the worldlings are forsaken by the good they have chosen, my God will not forsake me. I shall retain Him, my highest good, when I leave this world; yea, I shall possess Him in fuller, completer measure, in unspeakable joy and bliss in the world to come. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best and only Friend.

When all created streams are dried,
Thy fulness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in Thy Name.

No good in creatures can be found,
But may be found in Thee;

I must have all things and abound,
While God is God to me.

O that I had a stronger faith
To look within the veil,
To credit what my Saviour saith
Whose words can never fail!

He that has made my heaven secure,
Will here my good provide:
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?
What can I want beside?

O Lord, I cast my care on Thee;
I triumph and adore:
Henceforth my great concern shall be
To love and please Thee more.

—*John Ryland, 1777.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS GOD TO PRE- SERVE AND INCREASE HIS FAITH.

MEDITATION.

Rom. 10: 9. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

THE state of the unbeliever is deplorable; for he is like an unlighted, gloomy, and dreary chamber. But the state of the believer, who rejoices in the knowledge of God, of Jesus Christ, and of his own salvation, is

blessed. He is like a chamber in which a bright light is shining. His soul is illumined by the light of faith. This faith man cannot give to himself. It is God who must kindle faith within us, either through baptism, in which the Holy Ghost is shed on us abundantly, or through the Word of God, by which man obtains the knowledge and understanding of the way of salvation, assents to the Word through the power of God, receives it into his heart as a divine truth, and then in steadfast confidence apprehends God, appropriates Jesus Christ and His holy merit, and determines by God's grace to believe, live, and die according to this Word.

Therefore a devout Christian should (1) thank God for bringing him to faith and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and thus favoring him above Jews, Turks and heathen. (2) He should remember his baptismal covenant and the salvation which he has secured through it; and should not willingly break the covenant which he has made with God. (3) He should diligently and devoutly hear God's Word, in order that he may become more and more enlightened, and attain to greater knowledge. (4) He should practice what he hears and reads, and show his faith by his works. Hence (5) a true Christian should not rest satisfied to say, "I

believe," but should let the fruits of his faith, godliness, love, chastity, patience, meekness, and the like, shine forth in his whole life. Nor should he believe only for a time, but should remain steadfast in the faith until death. Then he can comfort himself with the assurance that he will receive the reward of his faith, the salvation of his soul.

PRAYER.

O gracious God! What mercy hast Thou not shown me, in that Thou hast brought me to the knowledge of salvation! I know the ground of my salvation, which is Jesus Christ with His merit, blood and death. I know the means of grace: the word of God and the holy sacraments. And I not only know these things, but I give assent to them; yea, I place all my hope and dependence on them. I know the true way to heaven; for whoever would come to God must believe. By this faith and knowledge I am distinguished from the unbelieving Jews, Turks, and heathen.

O God of all grace! Grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may cause this knowledge in me to be living knowledge. "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Grant me strength, that my faith may not be dead and unfruitful, but a living faith. Since I know Jesus Christ as my Saviour, I desire also to

love Him, to obey Him, to hold Him more dear than all the world, to serve Him alone, and to refuse to do what my own flesh and the evil world prompt me to do. Nothing in all the world shall be so dear to me as Jesus.

As I recognize the means of grace, I will with Thy help employ them for my soul's salvation. I will listen devoutly to Thy Word, and live in accordance with it. What Thy Word forbids, I will flee and forsake. And I will, on the other hand, by Thy help and the grace of the Holy Spirit, fulfill those duties and exercise myself in those virtues which Thy Word commands. The Holy Supper shall sanctify me wholly. I will partake of it frequently and reverently, as a food of sanctification for the strengthening of my faith and for my salvation, and will continue to grow in holiness.

O my God! Increase within me faith, holiness, and obedience, that with each day I may grow more pious, devout, and God-fearing, and become more and more conformed to the likeness of my Saviour. Keep me in this grace to my end, that I may live as a true and pious Christian, and may die at last in peace. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O for a faith that will not shrink,
Though prest by many a foe:
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe;

That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chastening rod:
But in the hour of grief 'or pain
Can lean upon its God:

A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without;
That when in danger knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt:

That bears unmoved the world's dread frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
That sin's wild ocean cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile:

A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last hour is fled,
And with a pure and heavenly ray
Lights up a dying bed.

Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en here the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.

—*William Hilly Bathurst, 1870.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS FOR HUMILITY.

MEDITATION.

I Peter 5: 5, 6. Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.

AMONG the sins against which the believer must contend is pride, which dwells in the heart, and manifests itself in words and deeds. Since the Fall into sin, we are proud by nature. But we must become humble by grace. He who does not become humble cannot please God, nor be a disciple of Christ.

If the devout Christian reflects upon this fact, he will pray for a heart that is humble (1) toward God. For "He hath shown thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). The Christian will be humble toward God when he reflects upon God's greatness, majesty and glory, and remembers how all the angels, seraphim and cherubim, and all the elect adore and praise Him: and when, on the other hand, he reflects what a wretched worm he himself is, and remembers that he is nothing but a mis-

erable man, whom God could in a moment destroy.

The devout Christian will be humble (2) toward his fellow-men, if he makes a lowly estimate of himself, and remembers that his neighbor may be much more pious and devout, and therefore much more acceptable to God, than he; that he and his neighbor have the one Word, the one baptism, the one heaven; and that he, as well as the poorest beggar, will decay and turn to ashes in the grave.

The devout Christian will also become humble, (3) if, when he views his own person, he remembers that all that he has, all his gifts and skill and success, and his life and fortune and prosperity are not from himself but from God; that God could quickly deprive him of these things; and that consequently he must not boast of them, nor exalt himself on account of them, nor listen to the smooth words of the flatterer.

In order that the Christian may not in any respect become proud, he should keep before his mind constantly the example of Jesus, who humbled himself under God and below all men, and who admonishes us: "Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart."

PRAYER.

O great, holy, and merciful God! who art the High and Exalted One, before whose throne cherubim and seraphim and all the elect cover their faces in humility! I confess unto Thee and lament that I am by nature inclined to pride and self-exaltation. Through the Fall into sin Satan has so poisoned my heart with pride, the source of all sin, that I often forget that I am but dust and ashes.

O my God! grant me a humble heart, that I may thoroughly realize that I owe my life, prosperity, and all that I possess to Thee. Let me humble myself under Thy mighty hand, and not impiously offend Thee by thoughts, words, or deeds. Teach me to see my wretched state and Thy great majesty. Let me realize that I derive nothing from myself but sin, death, and condemnation; and that whatever good I possess, I have received from Thy gracious hand: so that I may boast of nothing, but may regard all things as Thy gift and grace; and may remember that Thou canst take them all from me again, if in the multitude of Thy mercies I should forget Thee. Plant true humility in my heart. Let me obey, fear, honor, serve, and adore Thee. Let me praise and exalt Thee alone.

Plant in my heart also true humility toward my neighbor, that I may never look down upon him, nor exalt myself above him. Help me to remember that the proud have never been pleasing to Thee, but that Thou hast let Thy light and comfort and grace and goodness flow in streams of mercy upon the humble souls. Preserve me from proud thoughts, enable me to avoid proud words, and preserve me from conceit and boastfulness; for from these things nothing but contempt for my neighbor could spring. Impress upon my heart the image of my lowly Saviour, who humbled himself below angels and men, and who says to me: Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart. Grant that these words of my Saviour may resound in my heart whenever I am tempted to exalt myself. If my neighbor is of low estate, grant that I may not look down upon him. If he is great and rich and honored, let me remember that Thou hast bestowed these advantages upon him; so that I may not find fault with Thy dispensation, nor envy him, but may rejoice over his prosperity.

O my God, grant that I may be converted and become as a little child, thinking nothing of self, and being nothing in my own eyes. Bestow Thy Holy Spirit upon me, that I may daily die to the sin of pride, regard myself as

unworthy of any honor, desire honor from no one, and ascribe all glory to Thee. Grant me grace to realize with all humility of heart, that all that I have and am is due to Thy grace alone, and that of myself I may glory in nothing but in mine infirmities.

Teach me through such humility to live in peace and concord with all men. Let my heart always be the dwelling-place of the humble Jesus; then shall I never exalt myself. Pride and self-exaltation were the sin of Satan; from this sin preserve me by Thy grace. And should it ever please Thee, O God, to let me become an object of ridicule and contempt; should my enemy scorn me, and the haughty trample me under foot: give me grace to bear it all with humility, meekness, and patience, and to employ such treatment for my firmer establishment in humility and my greater carefulness in conduct. O Lord, Lord, grant me grace and strength to do all these things by Thy help. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Jesus, cast a look on me!
Give me true simplicity;
Make me poor and keep me low,
Seeking only Thee to know.

All that feeds my busy pride,
Cast it evermore aside;

Bid my will to Thine submit,
Lay me humbly at Thy feet.

Make me like a little child,
Simple, teachable, and mild;
Seeing only in Thy light,
Walking only in Thy might!

Leaning on Thy loving breast,
Where a weary soul may rest;
Feeling well the peace of God
Flowing from Thy precious blood.

—John Bertridge, 1773.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS FOR MEEK- NESS.

MEDITATION.

I Peter 2: 21-23. Because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow His steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

WHEN a man has begun to lead a Christian life, and has purified himself from gross sins, such as cursing, profaning the Sabbath, dissipation, unrighteousness, gambling, and worldly company, he must also endeavor to purify himself inwardly, particularly from pride, envy, anger, hatred and

vengefulness, and must prayerfully strive after meekness.

This meekness consists (1) in not returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, and in not permitting ourselves, out of hatred, anger, or revenge, to threaten our neighbor. (2) We cannot tell whether we possess this virtue of meekness or not, until an enemy attacks us and seeks to deprive us of our honor, property, or good name. If, under these provocations, we immediately give way to anger, and curse, scold, or threaten, the Saviour's spirit of meekness does not dwell in us. (3) It does not, indeed, conflict with true meekness to seek the government's protection against our enemies, just as Paul appealed to Cæsar and placed himself under Cæsar's protection, when his life was threatened. Acts 25:11. But it does not become the children of God to bite like dogs, to tear one another like lions, or to pursue one another in rage and bitterness like the wild beasts. (5) When our enemy persecutes us, God desires that we shall give the proof of our faith. He would also bring home to us the consciousness of our own former sins, and have us inquire whether we have not, perhaps, at some time by our unjust conduct caused sorrow to others.

The marks of meekness (6) are these: to forgive from the heart, to pray for our enemies (Matt. 5:44), to wish them well, to do good to them, to rejoice in their prosperity, not to pay attention to all that is said against us, not to reply to every railing accusation, and to be ready to be reconciled with our enemies.

PRAYER.

O loving God, who Thyself art Love, and who wouldest shed abroad Thy love within our hearts through the Holy Ghost! I confess unto Thee with heartfelt sorrow, that my heart is oftentimes rebellious and intractable. It ought to be humble, loving, meek, and gentle when my enemy pursues, hates, and persecutes me. But alas! instead of these needful Christian virtues, I find hatred, anger, revengefulness and enmity, prompting me to threaten those who injure me, and to revenge myself upon those who have unjustly attacked me.

But when I learn from Thy holy Word, that those who do such things shall not enter into the kingdom of God, and that such conduct toward my enemies is unbecoming a child of God and a Christian: I realize with dismay that I am still affected by the ways of Satan, who is revengeful, malicious and irreconcilable. But I beseech Thee to have mercy upon me, Thou

gracious God, and to give me Thy Holy Spirit, that He may purify my heart, and cleanse me from all malice and revengefulness. Help me to look always upon the example of my Lord Jesus, who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; who, when He suffered, threatened not to revenge Himself upon His enemies in the future, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously.

O grant me such a quiet, meek and peaceable mind, that I may not retain malice or bitterness in my heart, nor let the sun go down upon my wrath; but that, before the night comes on and I fall asleep, I may always forgive my enemies from the heart. When my enemy scorns me, give me grace to act as if I were deaf and dumb, and could neither hear nor make reply. Enable me to rejoice and wish him well when he is prosperous, and to help and befriend him when adversity befalls him.

Preserve me, that I may not manifest enmity toward any one in words or deeds, but may be merciful in heart, friendly and sincere in speech, kind in actions, and ready to do good to my enemies as well as to all other men. Let me not, by an unforgiving spirit, hinder my prayers and make void all my worship and service. Grant that, even as I would that Thou shouldest forgive me, so I may from the heart

forgive all those who trespass against me, lest I daily pray against myself in the Lord's Prayer. Bestow upon me the blessing which Thou hast promised to the meek: "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Through Thy Holy Spirit, subdue in me the evil lusts which war against this Christian virtue; so that I may live and die as Thy child, and at last, by Thy grace, may be transported to the home of peace in heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Lord, if Thou Thy grace impart,
Poor in spirit, meek in heart,
I shall as my Master be,
Clothéd with humility.

Simple, teachable, and mild,
Changed into a little child,
Pleased with all the Lord provides,
Weaned from all the world besides.

Father, fix my soul on Thee;
Every evil let me flee:
Nothing want beneath, above,
Happy in Thy precious love.

O that all may seek and find
Every good in Christ combined!
Him let Israel still adore,
Trust Him, praise Him evermore.

—C. Wesley, 1741.

THE CHRISTIAN ACKNOWLEDGES THE
CONSTANT GOODNESS OF GOD.

MEDITATION.

Lam. 3: 22, 23. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.

OTHER things are temporary, but the mercy of God endureth forever, as David declares in each verse of the 136 Psalm. God's mercy is like the love of a mother, who takes her new-born child in her arms, cares for it, nourishes it, and trains it up; for this is the way in which God acts toward us men. The devout Christian recognizes this truth. He realizes (1) that God's mercy is *undeserved*. Alas, we have not deserved kindness at God's hands. If He were to deal with us after our merits, He would measure out to us destruction in body and soul. (2) It is a mercy which is sorely *needed* by us. If God were not so good and merciful, we should perish in misery; we could not live for a single day, no, not for a single hour. For just as no creature can live without air, so men cannot exist without the goodness of God. Yea,—and this is the most important,—(3) it is a *constant* mercy and goodness. When the devout Christian looks back upon his whole life, from his birth on through

his youth and the succeeding years, he sees the goodness of God in it all. Whatever good there is in us is God's work. Whatever earthly possessions we have are God's gift. Yea — and this is still more wonderful — it is (4) a mercy which is bestowed upon the *unthankful* and the *wicked* also. On them also God letteth His sun shine; to them also He gives food and clothing. But they do not partake of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, because they close their hearts against Him.

The devout Christian lets the goodness of God lead him to repentance, and to the fear and love of God; and has the assurance that he shall enjoy God's goodness till his death, yea, throughout eternity.

PRAYER.

O God, how excellent is Thy loving kindness; therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house; Thou makest them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.

I too, O God, have experienced Thy loving kindness. It has been with me every hour, every day, every week, every year. Thy mercies have been new unto me every morning. In my childhood Thy mercy took me in its arms like a mother, and nourished me. In my youth, Thy

goodness took me by the hand and accompanied me everywhere. And in my later years, Thy loving kindness provided for me, preserved me, sustained me, and showered untold blessings upon me. Yea, Thy goodness has hovered over me till this very day and hour in which I stand before Thee. Thou hast shown me my way, and hast poured blessing, grace and comfort upon me. Thy mercy has frequently preserved me from misfortune and harm. Thy goodness and faithfulness have kept me in all my ways. They have been with me as I went out and in, so that no evil could befall me. Yea, in Thy mercy Thou hast filled my soul with heavenly light, illumined me by Thy Word, sanctified me by Thy Holy Spirit, and brought me to true and living knowledge of Thee. O my God! Let Thy mercy be with me in future. Forsake me not when I grow old and my hair turns gray. Let Thy mercy and faithfulness abide with me till death, till my soul returns to Thee for rest and my body reposes in the earth. Let Thy goodness lead me to repentance, and the contemplation of Thy mercies move me to yield my heart to Thee as Thy dwelling-place, and my soul as Thy possession. If in my weakness I should err and sin against Thee, have mercy upon me according to Thy loving kindness. Bring me again by Thy mercy upon the way of repentance

and peace, and let Thy grace rest on me here in time and there in eternity. For all the goodness which Thou hast vouchsafed unto me I give Thee thanks. I extol Thee with all my heart. And not only do I extol Thee here while I live, but I will, O good and merciful God, praise Thee there through all eternity. Amen.

HYMN.

Psalm 103.

S. M.

O bless the Lord, my soul!
Let all within me join,
And aid my tongue to bless His Name,
Whose favors are divine.

O bless the Lord, my soul!
Nor let His mercies lie
Forgotten in unthankfulness,
And without praises die.

'Tis He forgives thy sins;
'Tis He relieves thy pain;
'Tis He that heals thy sicknesses,
And gives thee strength again.

He crowns thy life with love,
When ransomed from the grave;
He that redeemed my soul from death
Hath sovereign power to save.

He fills the poor with good:
He gives the sufferers rest:

The Lord hath judgments for the proud,
And justice for the oppressed.

His wondrous works and ways
He made to Moses known;
But sent the world His truth and grace
By His beloved Son.

—Watts, 1719. a.

THE CHRISTIAN REFLECTS UPON THE
FUTURE GLORY OF THE CHILDREN
OF GOD.

MEDITATION.

I John 3: 2, 3. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. And every one that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

A DEVOUT Christian should daily, yea, hourly, reflect upon three things: Who he is, namely a child of God; what God is to him, namely, a Father, a Benefactor, and the best of friends; and what he yet has to expect from God, namely, heavenly bliss and glory. This reflection will kindle and increase love to God in him, and awaken a hatred and contempt for the world and its sinful doings.

For (1) the believers possess a great blessedness here in this world already: namely, forgiveness of sins, divine sonship, peace with God, a Comforter in all sorrows, an Intercessor, joy of soul, and rest in God. Compared with this blessedness, silver, gold, money, and even a royal crown are as nothing. (2) They have a still greater blessedness to expect in the next world; namely, entrance into heaven, beholding the Triune God, the society of the angels and of the elect, freedom from all ills, everlasting happiness, and, finally, a glad and glorious resurrection of the body.

A devout Christian (3) should rejoice at this prospect, comfort himself with it when he suffers, and be assured that at last all his sufferings shall be turned into eternal joy. He should, however, (4) take special care not to forfeit this blessedness by a sinful, worldly life, but remember that he is destined for a glorious future. To this end (5) he should remain steadfast in the faith and in holiness of life, look upon earthly things as transient, and often direct his thoughts to that heavenly abode where he hopes to dwell forever.

PRAYER.

How gracious and kind and merciful art Thou, O eternal and glorious God! Thou didst not only give to man great glory at his creation, but after the fall into sin Thou didst again promise great glory to all those who accept Thy grace, and who in faith and holy living obey the promptings of Thy Holy Spirit. Such regenerated and sanctified souls may comfort themselves with the reflection, that in this world already they are greatly blessed. They possess divine sonship, the righteousness of Christ, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and peace with Thee. They enjoy Thy favor, grace, and love, and the confidence that they may come to Thee in prayer at all times and receive from Thee help and mercy in every time of need.

But a still greater blessedness shall be theirs hereafter. For when their soul has departed from the body, it shall at once be admitted to the vision of Thy countenance, be numbered among Thy saints, and be filled with heavenly joys. To this blessedness the body also shall be admitted after the resurrection. It shall be transformed and shine like the sun. O my God! grant me grace to keep this future glory constantly in mind, and to remember, that in

dying I, in reality, only begin to live; that in death my misery but not my life shall find its end in Thee; and that I shall then pass from unrest to rest, from sorrow to joy, from anxiety to happiness, from the sadness of this vale of tears to the comfort of heaven.

O keep me in faith and piety. And when the world seeks to lead me astray, let me remember that I am Thy child, and that I look for eternal glory and happiness at Thy hands; so that I may never love the world and thus forfeit the glory of heaven. Grant that, even as the racers who ran in the course were intent upon pressing onward to reach the goal; so I may be careful in my course, and may walk not as unwise but as wise, and at the end of my life may be able to say: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

My soul, be on thy guard;
Ten thousand foes arise,
And hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

O watch, and fight, and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er;
Renew it boldly every day,
And help divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down;
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou receive thy crown.

Fight on, my soul, till death
Shall bring thee to thy God;
He'll take thee, at thy parting breath,
To His divine abode.

— *George Heath, 1781.*

THE CHRISTIAN CONFESSES HIS SINS,
AND PRAYS GOD FOR FORGIVENESS.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 51: 1, 2. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

THAT he has a gracious God is the greatest blessing of the Christian. The world, indeed, imagines that wealth, honor, and high living constitute happiness. But it deceives itself. All these things pass away, and are often

to blame for a bad conscience, a heavy responsibility, and an unhappy death.

Devout Christians therefore (1) daily examine their own conscience, whether they still stand in the faith. (2) When they go to confession, they not only think of their sins, but pray heartily to God for forgiveness. They repent of their sins, mourn over them, and seek refuge in the mercy of God and the bleeding wounds of Jesus, humbly praying for mercy. And when God has declared to them the forgiveness of their sins through the mouth of His servant, they comfort themselves with that declaration. (3) But they also seek to retain God's favor by letting the Holy Spirit rule in them. They seek to lead a Christian life in word and deed, and flee the lusts and evil habits of the past. Then they know that in life and in death they have a gracious and merciful God.

PRAYER.

Holy, Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! I poor sinner come into Thy presence, and humbly beseech Thee to pardon all my sins. O my God! I acknowledge that I have offended Thee many times by evil thoughts and words and deeds. O Lord, Lord, I lament and mourn over my sins. Thou hast through Holy Baptism made me a sheep of Thy fold and a member of

Thy body; and I ought, therefore, to listen to Thy voice and obey Thee alone. Yea, I ought, as belonging to Thee, devote all my members to Thee as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Thee. But alas! What shall I say? I have listened more to the voice of the world and of my own flesh than to Thee, and have often done what was displeasing to Thee. O the blindness of my heart! O the folly of my youthful years! If Thou enterest into judgment with me, and dealest with me according to Thy justice, then am I lost eternally. For my own conscience testifies against me, and my sins are more than the sand on the seashore. But I pray Thee, O Lord, have mercy upon me according to Thy loving-kindness. O my Father, do not charge to my account the evil which I have done against Thee in my life-time, but impute to me what Jesus my Saviour has done for me. I take refuge by faith in His blood, which was shed for me. I appropriate his merit, and say: For Christ's sake be merciful to me, a poor sinner! Henceforth I will begin a new and godly life, and nevermore, O Triune God, wilfully or consciously sin against Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

Psalm 51.

L. M.

O Thou hear'st when sinners cry;
Though all my crimes before Thee lie,
Behold them not with angry look,
But blot their memory from Thy book.

Create my nature pure within,
And form my soul averse to sin;
Let Thy good Spirit ne'er depart,
Nor hide Thy presence from my heart.

I cannot live without Thy light,
Cast out and banished from Thy sight;
Thy holy joys, my God, restore,
And guard me that I fall no more.

Though I have grieved Thy Spirit, Lord,
His help and comfort still afford;
And let me now come near Thy throne
To plead the merits of Thy Son.

A broken heart, my God, my King,
Is all the sacrifice I bring;
Look down, O Lord, with pitying eye,
And save the soul condemned to die.

O may Thy love inspire my tongue!
Salvation shall be all my song;
And all my powers shall join to bless
The Lord, my Strength and Righteousness.

—Watts, 1719. a.

ANOTHER PRAYER OF CONFESSION.

O Lord, and all-knowing God! from whom nothing is hid! Thou seest all that we men do, and hearest all that we say. Alas! when I think of this, I am ashamed; for I have said and thought and done so much that was wrong. How much evil hast Thou not hitherto seen and heard in me, and how much reason wouldest Thou not have to reject me forever as a disobedient child, and condemn me to hell! But behold, I come before Thee in this period of grace; I am ashamed to lift up mine eyes unto Thee; but I cry: God be merciful to me a sinner. Though I have abundantly deserved Thy punishment, chasten me not in Thy hot displeasure. Remember not the sins of my youth nor my many transgressions. According to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord. For the sake of the sufferings and death of Jesus, have mercy upon me.

Lord, Lord, gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and of great mercy! Thou wilt not be always wroth, neither wilt Thou keep Thine anger forever, but wilt have mercy upon me again. O deal not with me after my sins, nor reward me according to mine iniquities. O God! Thou hast said that Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, but that the sinner turn from his

way and live. Have mercy upon me, Thou justly offended God. Behold me not in my sins, but behold me in Jesus, Thy Son, my only Saviour, Mediator, and Redeemer. For the sake of His blood shed for me, have mercy upon me. For the sake of His holy wounds, have mercy upon me. For the sake of His perfect righteousness which I make mine by faith, have mercy upon me. Give me the blessed assurance, that my sins are forgiven, and that through Jesus my Saviour I am reconciled with Thee. I will, by the power of Thy Holy Spirit, amend my life, think of Thine all-seeing eye, and remember that wherever I may go and whatever I may do, Thou art present and seest all. Let this thought of Thine omnipresence never be lost from my heart. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidst me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,

Fightings and fears within, without,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am; Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because Thy promise I believe;
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am; Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

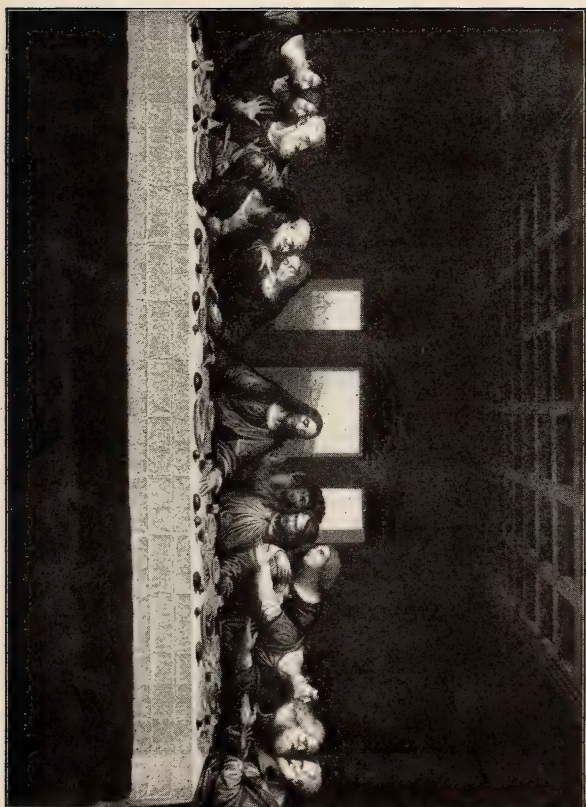
— *Charlotte Elliott, 1836. a.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS WHEN HE GOES TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MEDITATION.

I Cor. 11: 26. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come.

TO the means vouchsafed for the strengthening of our faith and our love toward God and men, belongs the Lord's Supper, in which Jesus desires to unite Himself with our souls, dwell in them, rule over them, sanctify



THE LAST SUPPER.



them, and preserve them in godliness to the end.

(1) The Christian does not despise nor neglect this Holy Supper, as the worldly do, whose minds are so distracted by vanity, love of the world, revenge, pride, and dissipation, that they have no thought for this pledge of God's grace.

(2) Nor does he come to the Lord's Table simply as a matter of habit. On the contrary, he comes with a humble, reverent, and believing heart, and with a firm determination to remain steadfast in the love of Jesus and the fear of God. (3) He resolves also, that, having partaken of the Lord's Supper, he will yield himself completely to God, and that, by virtue of the strength supplied by this food of the soul, he will do better day by day, become more devout and earnest in his religion and the exercise of Christian virtues, and will remain true to God in faith and life till his death.

PRAYER.

My Jesus! How can I sufficiently praise Thy great love, in that Thou hast not only given Thyself into death for me, a poor sinner, but hast ordained Thy holy body and Thy precious blood to be the food of my soul, in the Lord's Supper! O loving Saviour! Thy death gives me life, and Thy body and blood strengthen and refresh me to life eternal. Through this holy sacrament I

abide in Thee and Thou in me; Thou livest in me, and I attain in Thee righteousness and strength. Therefore my sins can not appal me, and Satan cannot condemn me; for in this feast of grace I receive the pledge of my forgiveness. Here I receive the body which was given into death for me, and the blood which was shed for me, for the remission of sins. This is the blood of atonement, through which satisfaction has been made for my sins and the sins of all men. As surely as I receive this blood, so surely I am reconciled with God and have the forgiveness of my sins.

In the first sacrament, Holy Baptism, which I have received, Thou hast given me the Holy Spirit as the earnest of my inheritance, and implanted the new life in me. By it Thou hast assured me that I am Thy child and heir. In the second sacrament, the Lord's Supper, Thou givest me the pledge of Thy body and blood, through which Thou wouldest preserve and strengthen the spiritual life in me. O my God! Sanctify my soul, strengthen my faith, and cleanse my heart, that I may receive this sacrament worthily and for my salvation. Grant that my thoughts may always be turned toward Thee. Expel from my heart all sinful imaginations and desires, and everything that would hinder my de-

votions; so that Thou mayest abide in me, and I may abide in Thee, to all eternity. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O God unseen, yet ever near,
Thy presence may we feel;
And thus, inspired with holy fear,
Before Thine altar kneel.

Here may Thy faithful people know
The blessings of Thy love;
The streams that through the desert flow,
The manna from above.

We come, obedient to Thy Word,
To feast on heavenly food;
Our meat the Body of the Lord,
Our drink, His precious blood.

Thus may we all Thy words obey;
For we, O God, are Thine;
And go rejoicing on our way,
Renewed with strength divine.

—*Edward Osler, 1836.*

ANOTHER PRAYER FOR ONE WHO PARTAKES OF THE
LORD'S SUPPER.

O Jesus! Since I now partake of Thy feast of love, I do so also in remembrance of Thee. I recall Thy love: how for my sake Thou didst come into the world, that Thou mightest make me an

heir of eternal life. I remember Thine anguish, pain, and wounds, through which my sins and punishment have been taken away and Thy righteousness has been bestowed upon me. I think of Thy death and resurrection, through which life and salvation have become mine. I know, O Jesus, that for Thy sake I receive grace, sonship, peace, and the joy of heaven. I shall not perish, if I am in Thee, O Jesus, and Thou art in me. O remain and dwell within my heart; live and reign therein. Let me be Thy possession in time and eternity. Let Thy body be my food, Thy blood my drink; and refresh me unto life eternal. Grant that I may never lose this treasure, but that Thou, my Jesus, mayest henceforth live, rule, and abide in me.

As the manna in the wilderness had to be gathered into a clean vessel, so do Thou purify my heart by true faith, by true repentance, love, and humility, that I may receive this pledge of Thy grace worthily, and ever retain it to the strengthening of my faith, the sanctification of my life, and the confident hope of eternal life. O blessed Holy Spirit, preserve me in this grace unto my happy end. Guard me against wilful sin and falling from grace, lest my last state be worse than the first. Let me continue steadfast in my faith in the Triune God, in love toward my neighbor, and in a godly life until death, that I

may receive the gracious reward of faith, the salvation of my soul. Amen.

HYMN.

8, 8, 7, 7.

Jesus, at Thy invitation
Draw we nigh with supplication;
Thou who hast Thy table spread,
With Thyself may we be fed.

Be Thy cross our meditation;
Be Thy name our consolation;
While Thy death we call to mind,
May we here its blessings find.

Here in all revive contrition;
Here renew to all remission;
Here increase our love of Thee,
Let us Thy salvation see.

Visit us, O bread of heaven;
Life from Thee to us be given,
Life divine that never ends,
That from Thee alone descends.

—*Arthur Tozer Russell, 1851. a.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS THAT GOD
WOULD GIVE HIM STRENGTH TO
OVERCOME SIN.

MEDITATION.

Rom 6: 12, 13. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

SIN is a turning away from God, a transgression of the divine law; it is unrighteousness. A believer does not willingly turn away from God, nor transgress God's command, nor do wrong; but his desire is that Jesus may live in him, and that the Holy Spirit may rule him. Because, however, he can not always accomplish this end perfectly, he must fight against sin.

This fight consists in this: (1) The believer knows that whoever is born of God does not commit sin, that is, not purposely and wilfully; and therefore he is careful not to offend God knowingly or deliberately. (2) But because he is not satisfied with simply avoiding wilful sin, and would gladly sanctify, consecrate, and yield his whole heart and soul and spirit and life to God, he often worries himself about a single sin-

ful word which he has uttered, or is saddened by a sinful thought which rises within him; and if he has offended his neighbor by some act, he grieves over it. In this fight (3) he seeks refuge in Jesus Christ, and prays for grace and strength to overcome sin and the world.

He should, therefore, (4) not only pray earnestly, but be on his guard against evil lusts and thoughts, and avoid those persons and places which might tempt him to fall into sin. (5) If he does this, he may rest assured that, since he has a desire to serve God with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, He who has worked in Him the will to do will also give him the strength to perform; that Jesus will cover his shortcomings and faults with His precious blood, and view his heart-felt desire with favor.

PRAYER.

Almighty God, who knowest what is in man! Thou seest how hard I must struggle against sin. It is my heart's desire to be and remain godly, to avoid angering Thee, to regulate my life according to Thy holy Word, and to do Thy holy will alone. But I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind. When I think, "Now I am firmly abiding by my good resolutions:" I often find that pride, self-will, self-esteem, envy, and prejudice arise in me against

my neighbor; that sinful thoughts make their appearance in my heart; yea, that I commit sin by thoughtless words and unbecoming actions.

O, I lament that I am so full of uncleanness. Cleanse Thou me, O Lord, and I shall be clean. Through Thy enlightenment and grace I recognize, that to commit sin is a great evil; yea, that it is my ruin. It is a plague from which I would gladly be free. I struggle against it by Thy grace; and yet I am sometimes overcome. This wretched condition grieves me. What will become of me at last, if one moment I am good and another bad, and my godliness has no permanency? Thou seest, O God, how I tremble at the thought of my own state, and yet how I cannot help myself by my own power. Therefore I come to Thee, and pray that Thou wouldst grant me strength to resist sin. Let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in me, and purify my heart. If I am tempted to be angry, revengeful, or proud, let Him say to me: "Remember that Thou art a Christian; remember that thou art a child of God or desirest to be one," and thus keep me meek, humble and godly.

Lord, Thou hast given me the will; give me also the power to do. Strengthen me in the inward man, that through Thy power I may lay aside one sin after another, and rule over it. Give me ever increasing strength to overcome

the world within me and without. I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengtheneth me. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Am I a soldier of the cross,
A follower of the Lamb?
And shall I fear to own His cause,
Or blush to speak His Name?

Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?

Are there no foes for me to face?
Must I not stem the flood?
Is this vain world a friend to grace,
To help me on to God?

Sure I must fight, if I would reign:
Increase my courage, Lord;
I'll bear the toil, endure the pain,
Supported by Thy Word.

Thy saints, in all this glorious war,
Shall conquer, though they die;
They see the triumph from afar,
By faith they bring it nigh.

When that illustrious day shall rise,
And all Thine armies shine
In robes of victory through the skies,
The glory shall be Thine.

THE CHRISTIAN DESIRES TO OFFER HIMSELF AS A SACRIFICE TO GOD.

MEDITATION.

Rom. 12: 1. I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

CHRISTIANS should constantly remember that we are not our own, but God's. This should encourage us to offer ourselves and all that we have to Him.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament in which God was to be pleased had to be (1) voluntary sacrifices. Man must live uprightly in the world, not from fear of punishment and of hell, but from love to God. Otherwise his offering is a forced and not a voluntary one. Even if there were no hell, a true Christian would out of love yield himself to God as His possession. (2) The sacrifices had to be offered to God entire, with head, entrails, and limbs, and not in part. Consequently, we should not give half of our heart to the world and half to God, but should love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our strength, and yield ourselves completely to Him. A divided sacrifice God rejects. (3) The sacrifices had to be without blemish; and no lame or blind animal dared be

brought to God as a sacrifice. We should therefore be careful not to stain our body and soul with sin; for a soul that is immersed in sin and shame, God will not receive into His hands nor into His heaven. (4) God took special delight in sacrifices which were young, in lambs a year or two years old, in order to show us, that we are not to wait with our conversion till old age, but to present ourselves as a sacrifice to God early, in the days of our youth. (5) What was once offered to God, dared not be exchanged or taken away. Even so the Christian should be steadfast in his resolve to surrender himself to God.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, who didst command Thy people Israel to bring Thee daily sacrifices, completely consecrated and devoted to Thee! Behold, I bring Thee my believing and penitent heart, which Thou wilt not despise. O heavenly Father, Thou hast created me to be Thine. O dearest Jesus, Thou hast redeemed me, that I might live in Thy kingdom, and serve Thee in holiness and righteousness. O blessed Holy Spirit, Thou hast sanctified me, that I might be Thy dwelling-place, and that Christ might live in me.

I would, therefore, again offer myself completely to Thee. I yield myself entirely to Thy will. I will henceforth no longer do what I will,

but what Thou wilt. I offer to Thee my mouth. With it I will praise and exalt Thee, and never misuse it for filthiness or foolish talking. I offer to Thee my heart. Fill it with a living faith, with Thy grace, with Thy love, with true piety. Is it a heart that is by nature unclean and unworthy to be offered? Then do Thou wash it clean with the blood of Jesus Christ, which I apprehend by faith; purify it by Thy Holy Spirit, sanctify it as Thy dwelling-place, and reign within it. I offer to Thee my life. I will regulate it by Thy Word and the promptings of the Holy Spirit. I offer to Thee my members. Grant that they may be weapons and instruments of righteousness. Let me not employ them for purposes of sin and shame, but keep them consecrated to Thee. As, in Old Testament times, that which was offered was thenceforth to be kept as a thing apart, so will I separate myself from the world and avoid its society.

I will offer myself to Thee now while I am alive and well, and not wait till I have been cast upon a bed of sickness; for then it may be too late. O Lord, who didst at all times, morning, noon, and night, accept offerings, graciously accept mine also. Am I bringing it to Thee only in the mid-day of my life, or is the evening perhaps already at hand? Have I wasted the days of my youth, the morning of my life? — Thou

wilt not on this account despise my offering. I bring it to Thee in faith like Abel. Behold it in mercy. For the remainder of my days I surrender myself completely to Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

My God, accept my heart this day,
And make it always Thine,
That I from Thee no more may stray,
No more from Thee decline.

Before the cross of Him who died,
Behold, I prostrate fall;
Let every sin be crucified,
Let Christ be all in all.

Anoint me with Thy heavenly grace,
Adopt me for Thine own;
That I may see Thy glorious face,
And worship at Thy throne.

May the dear blood, once shed for me,
My blest Atonement prove,
That I from first to last may be
The purchase of Thy love.

Let every thought, and work, and word,
To Thee be ever given;
Then life shall be Thy service, Lord,
And death the gate of heaven.

—Matthew Bridges, 1848.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS FOR PIETY.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 37: 37. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.

NEXT to faith itself, piety is one of the most precious of virtues, not only because it is a fruit of faith, but also because it preserves man's soul, body, and honor from sin and shame. This virtue is an ornament of youth and a becoming grace of old age. God Himself admonished Abraham, when the latter was about to journey to a strange land: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect." (Gen 17: 1.)

Piety does not, however, consist merely (1) in outward morality; for this is found also among the heathen. It must spring from faith, and from love to God; and must have its root in the inmost soul. (2) Piety requires not only uprightness and sincerity of heart toward God and our neighbor, but also blameless conduct. The man who does not avoid unbecoming speech and unchristian deeds cannot be said to be a pious man. (3) Piety should also continue till death. It is not sufficient to be pious two or three days before we go to the Lord's Supper. Our motto must be that of Job: "Till I die I will not remove mine

integrity from me." (Job 27: 5.) Piety is produced in us through the work of the Holy Spirit, and has the most blessed and glorious promises for this life and for that which is to come.

PRAYER.

O Holy God! when I think of my natural depravity and my many sins, I scarcely know whether I dare venture to come before Thy face. Thou sayest to me: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect," and "if thou doest well, thou shalt be accepted. Yea, fear God, and do right, and it shall be well with thee." But alas, my piety has made no progress. I have hitherto been entangled in the world and its affairs, its habits and vanities. And where the world enters, Christ departs; where the love of the world reigns, godliness is at an end.

But since I can not be pleasing to Thee in such a condition, and none but the believing and godly find favor in Thy sight, grant me a godly heart. Help me to be genuinely pious. Let my whole religious life be upright and sincere, and not a mere eye-service or hypocrisy. Grant me grace to strive after true godliness,—not one which is seeming and outward only, but one which has its source in the heart,—that I may love Thee above all things, and may always do those things which are pleasing to Thee; yea,

that, just as an obedient child looks for its parent's permission in its undertakings, so I may always look to Thy holy Word and commandments to see whether what I propose to do is becoming to me as a Christian. If my heart is thus obedient, then I shall speak and do nothing but that which is pleasing to Thee.

My God! I have formed this resolution in Thy name. Give me grace and strength to carry it out. If in the years that are gone I have not served Thee as I ought, forgive me for Christ's sake. What in my blindness and folly I have neglected, I will now with all the greater zeal devote myself to accomplish. I will live henceforth, not according to the lusts of the flesh, but according to Thy will. I will seek to become and remain godly in heart and life, that I may at last, as a true Christian, die a happy death. To this end, grant me from on high the power of Thy Holy Spirit for Christ's sake. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O could I find from day to day
A nearness to my God!
Then should my hours glide sweet away
And lean upon His Word.

Lord, I desire with Thee to live,
Anew from day to day,

In joys the world can never give,
Nor ever take away.

O Jesus, come and rule my heart,
And make me wholly Thine,
That I may never more depart,
Nor grieve Thy love divine.

Thus till my last expiring breath
Thy goodness I'll adore;
And when my flesh dissolves in death,
My soul shall love Thee more.

— *Benjamin Cleveland, 1792.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS FOR A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

MEDITATION.

II. Cor. 1: 12. For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.

MOST people are careful to keep their body in a state of health, and to acquire and retain earthly possessions. Would that they made equal efforts to keep their conscience pure and blameless.

Conscience is (1) like the eye, which cannot endure a grain of dust. It is the accuser, witness,

and judge of a wicked person. The remembrance of sin remains in the conscience like scars on the face. (2) On the day of judgment God and the conscience will be witnesses, against whose testimony nothing can be advanced. And because these witnesses cannot be gainsaid, the judgment will soon be completed.

The devout Christian will keep a good conscience, (3) if he diligently hears and reads God's Word, regulates his life by it, and inquires concerning all that he undertakes to speak or do, whether it is allowed by God's holy Word. And further, (4) if he avoids sinful company and associations. For just as he who handles fire or water is apt to be burned or become wet, so the conscience is apt to be harmed in the society of conscienceless persons. (5) The conscience is preserved pure by devout, earnest prayer, and by the remembrance that God is everywhere present, beholding all that we do.

PRAYER.

O Lord, my God! How great is the goodness and love which Thou dost manifest toward us! Thou givest us life and health, and lettest it be well with us according to Thy mercy. O my God! all these things are the gift of Thy grace. But they shall become as bitter wormwood, if, along

with the healthy body and all Thine other gifts, we do not have a good conscience.

Therefore, O my God, have mercy upon me, and let me live in Thy fear, lest I do violence to my conscience. For conscience is as tender as the eye; and just as the eye, if the least dust gets into it, becomes irritated, tearful, and inflamed, and cannot be properly opened, so also the conscience, if it has been disobeyed, becomes restless, accuses and condemns, and, when thoroughly aroused, makes us hesitate to lift our eyes toward heaven.

O my God, I desire to bring before Thee a soul unharmed and a conscience undefiled. Therefore do Thou rule me by Thy Holy Spirit, that I may be as careful of my conscience as of my eye. O how great a treasure and how soft a pillow is a good conscience! Who will accuse me when my conscience acquits me? For if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Who can make me sorrowful, if my conscience makes me joyful? Who can make me anxious and troubled, if my conscience comforts and sustains me? O my God, let me cherish this treasure! Help me never to speak anything which will cause me remorse of conscience. Help me never to consent to a sin in word or deed, lest I lay a heavy burden upon

my soul, which might oppress me throughout my life or on my death-bed, and bring upon me Thy wrath and punishment.

Graciously preserve me from the anguish and remorse of a wounded conscience. To this end, grant me grace always to conduct myself as a Christian should. Let the thought that Thou art omnipresent deter me from evil. Let me remember that Thou art a reader of the heart, and that nothing is hidden from Thy sight. And since I cannot hide from my own conscience, but experience its accusations as soon as I do evil, let me bear in mind that still less can I hide from Thee, Thou all-seeing and all-knowing God.

Grant me grace to look unto Jesus, my Saviour, and to walk in His footsteps. Let me observe Thy Word as my rule of faith and life: that I may never offend my conscience by denying the faith, nor ever deliberately sin against Thee. O Lord Jesus, cleanse me with Thy precious blood, pardon all my sins, and grant me true peace of heart and conscience. O Holy Spirit, lead me ever in paths of righteousness; then shall my conscience remain unseared, and Thy dwelling in my heart be undisturbed. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M. D.

Jesus, my Strength, my Hope,
On Thee I cast my care;
With humble confidence look up,
And know Thou hear'st my prayer.
Give me on Thee to wait,
Till I can all things do;
On Thee, almighty to create,
Almighty to renew.

I want a godly fear,
A quick, discerning eye,
That looks to Thee when sin is near,
And sees the tempter fly;
A spirit still prepared,
And armed with jealous care,
Forever standing on its guard,
And watching unto prayer.

I want a true regard,
A single steady aim,
Unmoved by threatening or reward,
To Thee and Thy great Name:
A zealous, just concern
For Thine immortal praise;
A pure desire that all may learn
And glorify Thy grace.

I rest upon Thy Word;
Thy promise is for me:
My succor and salvation, Lord,
Shall surely come from Thee.

But let me still abide,
Nor from my hope remove,
Till Thou my patient spirit guide
Into Thy perfect love.

—Charles Wesley, 1742.

BELIEVING PARENTS BRING THEIR CHILDREN TO GOD IN PRAYER.

MEDITATION.

Is. 8: 18. Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion.
John 17, 12.

TO Christian parents, the welfare of their children is a matter of very great concern. Their children are a sacred trust, for which God will hold them responsible. If pious parents reflect upon this fact, they will (1) pray for their offspring even before they are born; and afterwards they will never come before God without praying for them. They will in particular pray, that God may give their children a right heart, and grant them the Holy Spirit to sanctify, rule, and guide them; for only thus can a true basis for their happiness be laid. Compared with this, wealth, skill, and worldly prudence are as nothing.

Parents should, however, not only pray for

their children, but should (2) also train them up in the fear of God. For this purpose, it is necessary that they should not allow the children to follow their own will; for the will of a child is by nature perverse, and the imagination is evil from youth up. They should have their children instructed in the knowledge of God, should encourage them to prayer and Christian conduct, and not allow them to mingle in the society of vain and wicked persons. For if they allow this, their prayer is vain, and they really mock God.

Neglect in training the children involves a heavy responsibility of the parents before God; for God will require the blood of neglected children at their hands. It will also bring shame and reproach upon the parents; for, instead of being an honor, the children will be a disgrace to them, often in their lifetime, and certainly after their death. Neglect of training also brings the wrath of God upon the parents, as may be seen from I Sam. 2: 29 and 4: 18. (4) Negligent parents bring themselves and their children to hell, and their indulgence is, therefore, no real kindness, but cruelty.

PRAYER.

Lord God Almighty, Thou Father of mercies! Thou hast, along with Thine other gifts of grace, also bestowed children upon me; and I give Thee

thanks and praise for them. But these children I regard as a sacred trust which Thou hast committed unto me, and which Thou wilt again require at my hands. I regard them as souls which Jesus has purchased with His precious blood, which the Holy Spirit has sanctified in Holy Baptism, and which Thou hast accepted as Thy children. I am concerned, therefore, that none of them should be lost through my fault. Thou sayest to me and to all parents: Keep this child; if by any means it be missing, then shall thy life be for its life.

Therefore, O Father of grace, I come to Thee, and bring my children before Thee in prayer. I will do what I am able to do; I will train them up for Thy glory, admonish them, correct them, instruct them, and pray for them. But O Lord, Lord, do Thou look after them. I laid them into the arms of Thy mercy in Holy Baptism soon after their birth. Behold I do the same now in my prayer. O bless my children; go in and out with them, and keep them in Thy fear, that they may never burden their conscience with sin, nor offend Thee, nor, worst of all, fall from Thy grace. Give them a believing, humble, obedient, and godly heart, that they, like the youthful Jesus, may increase in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men. Impress upon their heart the image of Jesus, that they may keep

Thy grace and a good conscience to their happy end.

O let my children be devout in their prayers, well-grounded in the Christian religion, steadfast in the faith, diligent in Thy service, chaste in their life, and godly in their conduct, that they may give no offense to any one by their words or deeds, and may not bring upon themselves condemnation. Preserve them from temptations and evil company. Let Thy Holy Spirit constantly remind them of Thy all-holy presence. Let them remember that Thou art with them at home and away from home, in the chamber, by day and by night, in society and in solitude.

Let Thy angel keep them as they go out and in; let him guard them when they are traveling, or engaged in their business, or among strangers. Give them Thy holy angels as companions, as Thou didst to Tobias; let Thy angels lead them out of danger, as they did Lot; and let the angels keep watch and guard over them, as over Jacob. But should it please Thee to let me suffer affliction in my children, either through their sickness or their death, or through some other misfortune which I must behold them suffer: grant me, in such affliction, grace to remember, that nothing can happen without Thee; that the children were Thine before they were mine; and that Thou hast a perfect right to take

them again to Thyself. Shouldest Thou will, that by means of the sufferings, misfortunes, or death of my children I should be drawn nearer to Thee; that in this way I should be taught the fleeting character of all earthly gifts, and be admonished to love Thee alone as the true and perfect good,— then keep me, on this thorny way, in steadfast faith and firm dependence on Thy almighty power, which can end, and turn into good, all things, even my children's cross.

Bless them also in earthly things: care and provide for them; give them food and raiment; and deal with them as their mighty heavenly Father. Be their helper in danger and misfortune, their physician in sickness, their counselor in perplexity. Give to each of them a pious soul, a healthy body, and a sound mind. Let them live as in Thy sight, and ever honor and praise Thee. Implant in their hearts true religion, and keep them in Thy grace, that I may behold them with joy and consolation.

O God, hear my prayer, and remember that they are Thy children as well as mine. Hear the supplications which I bring for them before the throne of Thy grace. Preserve me from being brought to shame through my children, either in my life-time or after my death. On the day of Judgment let me and all my children stand at Thy right hand; and let me be able to say, to Thy

glory: "Here am I and the children which Thou hast given me. I have lost none of them." Yea, my God, grant me this joy: that none of my children may be lost, but that they all with me, and I with them, may enter into Thy glory. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

God of mercy, hear our prayer
For the children Thou hast given;
Let them all Thy blessings share,
Grace on earth and bliss in heaven.

Cleanse their souls from every stain
Through the Saviour's precious blood;
Let them all be born again,
And be reconciled to God.

For this mercy, Lord, we cry;
Bend Thine ever-gracious ear;
While on Thee our souls rely,
Hear our prayer, in mercy hear.

—*Thomas Hastings, 1834.*

PIOUS CHILDREN PRAY FOR THEIR PARENTS.

MEDITATION.

Eph. 6: 1-3. Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth.

AMONG the great sins by which human beings bring a curse upon themselves, is that committed by grown-up sons and daughters who sin against their parents. While parents endure much care, trouble, and vexation on account of their children from the time of their birth; yet they suffer most keenly when their children are obstinate, self-willed, and perverse in those later years in which they ought to be the source of unalloyed joy and happiness.

Pious children should, therefore, (1) pray diligently for their parents, and entreat God to grant their parents every blessing: health, prosperity, long life, and preservation from all misfortune. Pious children should (2) love their parents, gladly wait on them, be willing and prompt to serve them, and care for them when they are sick. They should (3) obey their parents cheerfully, and permit themselves to be trained

up in all goodness. And when they think of being married, they should not enter upon the state of matrimony without their parents' knowledge and consent, lest such a marriage should bring a curse and misfortune upon them. Pious children should (4) honor their parents in their heart, and recognize that God has set the parents in His place over them, inasmuch as He provides for all their wants through their parents. They should be respectful toward them in word and deed, should not speak angrily to them, should not use harsh or unkind words toward them, and should defend the honor and good name of their parents. Pious children should (5) remember, that they can never repay all that their parents have done for them. Remember what Thy mother has borne for thee, and with what toil and labor thy father has provided for thee. (6) Unthankful and rebellious children are on the certain road to hell. It can never be well with them, if, before they die, they do not, with genuine, heartfelt repentance and many tears, mourn over the sins and wickedness which they have committed against their parents.

PRAYER.

O gracious and merciful God! I give Thee heartfelt thanks, that Thou hast let me be born of good Christian parents. This is the first bless-

ing which Thou bestowedst upon me. If my parents had been Jews, Turks, or heathen, then I should be as hardened, as unbelieving, and as lacking in Christian knowledge as they. As my parents' first care after my birth was that I should be laid in Thy arms, O heavenly Father, through holy baptism, in which Thou gavest me the Holy Spirit as the earnest of my sonship and of my heavenly inheritance; so let Thy good Spirit ever lead and guide me, that I may be careful to fulfil my duties towards Thee and my parents.

I come now into Thy holy presence with my prayer, and beseech Thee: O grant my parents health, guard them against misfortune, prosper them in their occupation, let Thy blessing rest on their labor, give them a long life, and recompense with spiritual and heavenly gifts the faithfulness which they have shown toward me, and which I cannot recount nor requite.

Give me, O heavenly Father, an obedient heart, that I may not consciously or wilfully grieve or offend them. Let me constantly keep before me the example of my Lord Jesus, who was not only obedient to Thee, His heavenly Father, but also to His foster-father Joseph and to Mary His mother. Let me always, by my childlike obedience, be the source of joy and comfort to my parents, even in their old age. Guard me,

that I may not by disobedience and rebelliousness bring upon myself the curse which Thou hast threatened against wicked children; but let it be well with me here in time and there in eternity.

Give me a heart that is respectful toward them. Let me not anger them by word or deed, but conduct myself toward them with proper humility, obey them with cheerfulness, and even bear their chastisement without contradiction. Preserve me, that I may not become like those wicked children who mock at their parents, despise them, and cause them nothing but grief and sorrow; but who also incur a curse, and lose for all eternity the blessing which Thou hast promised to good and pious children. Grant me Thy grace, that I may not sin against my parents. Let me ever remember what my mother has suffered on my account, and what care it has cost my parents to bring me up. And let loving gratitude prompt me never to be the source of sorrow but always of joy to them.

If in the days of my childhood I have done toward my parents what I should not have done, I now seek pardon, O God, of Thee and of them, and promise that, by Thy grace, I will seek by my obedience and Christian conduct to fill them with joy. Grant me Thy Holy Spirit, that, as becomes a child of God, I may walk in faith,

in piety, in chastity, and in the fear of God, and that I may, together with my parents, stand at Thy right hand on the day of Judgment, and enter into Thy glory. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Lamb of God, I look to Thee;
Thou shalt my example be;
Thou art gentle, meek, and mild,
Thou wast once a little child.

Fain I would be as Thou art;
Give me Thy obedient heart.
Thou art pitiful and kind:
Let me have Thy loving mind.

Loving Jesus, gentle Lamb,
In Thy gracious hands I am;
Make me, Saviour, what Thou art,
Live Thyself within my heart.

I shall then show forth Thy praise,
Serve Thee all my happy days:
Then the world shall always see
Christ, the holy Child, in me.

— *Charles Wesley, 1724.*



CHRIST COMFORTING.

BOOK II.

FOR THE USE OF THE AFFLICTED.

THE AFFLICTED PERSON FINDS COMFORT IN GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE.

MEDITATION.

Isa. 41: 10. Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

IF there be anything that can lift up the afflicted soul, it is certainly the almighty power of God. This is the anchor to which the afflicted cling when they call to mind (1) that with God nothing is impossible. There is no misery so great, but that God can deliver from it; no burden so heavy, but that He can remove it; no misfortune so threatening, but that He can turn it aside. (2) Afflicted persons should remember, that others have borne much heavier burdens, and yet God has delivered them. They should therefore say with joy: "O God, Thou art to-day yet as great as Thou hast been from all eternity; my trust is entirely in Thee."

They should remember (3) that the omnipotence of God means power unbounded; and they should consequently not lose courage, even though they do not see in what manner they can be helped; for the manner in which the help is to come should be entrusted to the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of God. "Your thoughts are not my thoughts, saith the Lord, neither are my ways your ways." Isa. 55: 8. This reflection should strengthen the afflicted to trust and hope that God can and will help them; and should enable them to be uncomplaining, to hope, to pray, to trust in God, to bear their affliction patiently, and joyfully to lift up their eyes to heaven and say: My help cometh from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

PRAYER.

O good and gracious God! Thou knowest how sorely my heart is troubled. There lies upon it a great stone which I cannot roll away, a heavy burden which I can scarcely bear. Therefore I come to Thee, O almighty God, and pour out my heart before Thee, who art my confidence. I cast my burden on Thee, and pray that Thou wouldst care for me, deliver me, and sustain me. The storm-tossed ship clings to the anchor, and I cling to Thee, O living and mighty God. The game pursued by the hunter seeks refuge in the

mountains, and I lift up mine eyes to Thee, O my Rock, my Refuge, and my Defense. I will not despair; for I know that Thou art an almighty God, who art able to help, and to whom nothing is impossible. Therefore, O Lord, do Thou save me, and I shall be saved. Speak Thou the word, and my sorrow shall flee, and I shall be delivered.

O my God, I know that Thou art merciful; therefore have mercy now upon me, poor miserable one. Thou knowest my pain, Thou seest my heart; Thou hast laid this burden upon me: help me to bear it. I know Thou art a wise God. Thou knowest ways and means which are hidden from me. O reveal to my gaze a fountain of consolation as once to Hagar in the wilderness; speak comfort to me as once Thou didst to the sorrowing widow; help me as Thou didst the forsaken Elisha; and manifest Thy goodness in me as in the captive Peter. Loose the bonds of misery and wretchedness from my heart. Let the light of Thy joy arise within me, and let me be re-assured by Thy words: "I will not leave Thee nor forsake Thee; for a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee." I know Thou art a faithful God, who hast never yet forsaken any one, and who wilt not forsake me.

Behold, O Lord my God, the wretched and helpless soul which lies prostrate before Thy throne of grace. Send me help from the sanctuary, and strengthen me out of Zion. Lord, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me. My God and Father, if Thou wilt not help me, who shall? From my birth I have been dependent upon Thee. Thou hast taken me into the arms of Thy unwearied mercy, and hast carried me hitherto. O let me find help in Thee now. I will cry unto Thee until Thou sayest: "Be it unto Thee even as thou wilt" Amen.

HYMN.

L. M., 6 lines

(Wer nur den lieben Gott laesst walten.)

My God, I leave to Thee my ways;
 I hope in Thee, whate'er betide,
 To find Thee in the evil days
 My all-sufficient Strength and Guide;
 Who trusts in God's unchanging love
 Builds on the Rock that naught can move.

Help me my restless heart to still,
 And wait in cheerful hope, content
 To take whate'er Thy gracious will,
 Thy all-discerning love, hath sent;
 Nor doubt my inmost wants are known
 To Him who chose me for His own.

Thou knowest when joyful hours are best,
 And send'st them as Thou seest it meet.
 When I have borne the fiery test,
 And am made free from all deceit,
 Thou com'st to me all unaware,
 And mak'st me own Thy loving care.

Help me to swerve not from Thy ways,
 But do my own part faithfully,
 And trust Thy promises of grace,
 That they may be fulfilled in me.
 Thou never wilt forsake at need
 The soul that trusts in Thee indeed.

— *George Neumark, 1657.*

From Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1855.

THE AFFLICTED PERSON COMFORTS HIMSELF WITH THE THOUGHT OF GOD'S LOVE.

MEDITATION.

Isa. 54: 7, 8. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer.

NOTHING more comforting can be spoken to a sorrowing soul in its trouble and trials and crosses, than the assurance that it is still loved by God. In deep sorrows

one of the first thoughts suggested by Satan and our own flesh is this: "God is thy enemy; He loves thee no more; for if He loved thee, He would never afflict thee so, nor hide his countenance from thee" The afflicted person, however, should not entertain such a thought, but should oppose it by recalling the love of God, and by remembering that He does not forget His children.

He should bear in mind (1) that to live in affliction and sorrow is quite consistent with being a child of God; for Christ, the beloved Son of God, suffered many sorrows, and yet He remained the Son of God. (2) The afflicted person should remember that God still loves those whom He permits to suffer affliction, trials, and crosses. A father still remains a father, whether he caresses his child or chastises it with a whip. (3) The cross is not sent upon the afflicted soul out of anger, nor for the purpose of working its ruin or harm, but in order that the soul may learn more of God's goodness, omnipotence, faithfulness, and wisdom. (4) The love of God is very active toward those who are bearing a cross,—preserving, guarding, strengthening, and blessing them. They are often refreshed and gladdened in a remarkable manner. These are all proofs of God's love.

PRAYER.

The Lord is on my side, I will not fear. Thou art my Rock, and my Fortress, and my High Tower, and my Deliverer. Thus I sigh, O my God, in my sorrow and anxiety of soul. O Lord, Lord, Thou knowest well how sad is my heart, how full of sorrow and pain I am. But I know that if Thou sustain me, this burden cannot overwhelm me. O do not hide Thy face from me any longer. I am oppressed; undertake for me. From my youth up Thou hast shown me much love and goodness. O embrace me with Thy love in this hour of my soul's affliction. The sheep, pursued, flees to its shepherd; the child, frightened, comes to its father; therefore I come to Thee, my Shepherd and my Father.

O great God, Thou hast promised to help me, and hast said: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." And now, O mighty God, I need Thy help; be with me; leave me not, neither forsake me. I know that I am not forsaken; for Thy love is so tender, that Thou must have mercy upon me. Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness hast Thou drawn me. Embrace me now with the arms of

Thy love; hold me up, that I sink not; refresh me in my affliction; make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Give me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Let Thy love and goodness, which others have so often extolled, be manifested also to me, that I with them may praise Thy glorious name. O Thou God of love, seal in my heart the blessed assurance that, as little as a father can forget his child, so little hast Thou forgotten me. Faithful Father, behold Thy child is sorrowing; comfort it: it is full of anxiety; be merciful and help it. Amen.

HYMN.

8, 7.

God is Love; His mercy brightens
All the path in which we rove;
Bliss He wakes, and woe He lightens:
God is wisdom, God is Love.

Chance and change are busy ever;
Man decays, and ages move:
But His mercy waneth never;
God is wisdom, God is Love.

E'en the hour that darkest seemeth
Will His changeless goodness prove;
From the gloom His brightness streameth:
God is wisdom, God is Love.

He with earthly cares entwineth
Hope and comfort from above:
Everywhere His glory shineth;
God is wisdom, God is Love.

—*Sir John Browning, 1825, a.*

THE AFFLICTED PERSON COMFORTS
HIMSELF WITH THE HOPE OF
GOD'S HELP.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 121: 1, 2. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from
the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

TO have no help in suffering and wretchedness is more sad than the suffering itself. Afflicted souls should sustain themselves with the thought that (1) God *is able* to help, because with Him nothing is impossible. Nothing is too difficult, nothing too great for Him. He can help and deliver, no matter what our situation may be. Afflicted persons should (2) remember that God *desires* to help them because of His precious promises that He will be with them in trouble and deliver them, and that He will not leave nor forsake them. They should (3) call to mind the example of others whom God has helped in the past. Others have perhaps been poorer, more wretched, more sad, more for-

saken, more miserable than we, and yet the Lord has helped them; why then should we lose hope?

Amid prayer and supplication the afflicted person should (4) await God's help with hope and confidence, and firmly believe that His help will not fail. For the word of the Lord is right, and all His works are done in truth. Trust confidently in His word; and though thy heart bids thee doubt, be not dismayed. If afflicted persons (5) do not see how they can be helped, let them remember that God can do abundantly above all that we ask or think, and that He Himself will be their Helper, their Father, their Comforter, their Deliverer, their Succor. If they have God, they have all. They should also give their grief time to assuage; for it is a merciful provision of God, that the edge of grief is worn off by time.

PRAYER.

In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord. O, to whom else shall I turn, whom else shall I seek in my sorrow and grief of heart, but Thee alone, my God? Thou hast never yet let me go away sorrowful from Thy most holy presence. Therefore hear my prayer now; give ear to my supplication, my King and my God. When I cry unto Thee, be not silent, but answer me speedily. From Thy hand has come the affliction which I suffer; Thou also canst in mercy free me

from it. Thou Lord, Lord, killest and makest alive. Thou bringest down to the grave and bringest up. Thou makest poor and makest rich, Thou bringest low and liftest up. Thou raisest up the poor out of the dust, and liftest the needy out of the dunghill. Therefore I say in faith: Lord help me. Thou canst help me, O God; for Thou art almighty. Thou desirest to help; for Thou hast promised to do so. Father, wilt Thou forsake Thy child? My Father, canst Thou hear the cry of Thy child and not come to his aid? Thou hast said: "Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. My bowels are troubled for thee; I will surely have mercy upon thee." Therefore hearken to me now; hear the cry of my heart and the lamentations of my mouth.

O my Father, I know that Thou dost always hear me. I will not seek to set the day nor the hour when Thou shouldest help. I will cheerfully await Thy time. But strengthen me meanwhile by Thy Holy Spirit. Increase my faith, my hope, my trust; give me the needful patience and grace to bear my affliction; and let me at last behold the day when Thou shalt gladden me with Thy mercy. O my Father! Thou hast never yet forsaken any one; forsake not me. Thou hast ever cheered the afflicted; cheer me also. Thou hast helped the needy; help me. When and how

and where to help, I leave entirely to Thy wisdom, love, goodness, and grace. Be content, then, my heart. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

Your harps, ye trembling saints,
Down from the willows take;
Loud, to the praise of Love divine,
Bid every string awake.

Though in a foreign land,
We are not far from home:
And nearer to our house above
We every moment come.

His grace will to the end
Stronger and brighter shine;
Nor present things, nor things to come,
Shall quench the spark divine.

When we in darkness walk,
Nor feel the heavenly flame,
Then is the time to trust our God,
And rest upon His name.

Soon shall our doubts and fears
Subside, at His control:
His loving-kindness shall break through
The midnight of the soul.

Blest is the man, O God,
That stays himself on Thee!
Who waits for Thy salvation, Lord,
Shall Thy salvation see.

— *Augustus M. Toplady, 1772.*

THE AFFLICTED PERSON COMFORTS
HIMSELF WITH THE THOUGHT
OF GOD'S MERCY.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 103: 8, 9, 13. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will He keep His anger forever. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him.

HOW sad it is, in times of affliction, to have to deal with persons who are hard-hearted and unkind. But a grief-stricken child of God should rest assured (1) that his faithful God in heaven knows how great and burdensome are his sufferings, misery, and afflictions, how long they will last, and how hard they are for the soul to bear. God not only knows this, but He (2) has compassion for the afflicted one. This we can see in the example of the sorrowing widow at Nain and of all the sick and sorrowing ones whom He has graciously relieved. Thus He spoke of the multitude: "I

have compassion on the multitude.” And concerning Zion: “My bowels are troubled for thee; I will surely have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord.”

In reflecting upon the fact that God is merciful and exercises compassion, (3) the afflicted one should not despair, but seek refuge in the mercy of God. For they that mourn shall be comforted. (4) God manifests His mercy toward the sorrowing either by giving them cheerfulness and courage and strength to endure their afflictions, or else by taking their burden away from them. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. He will not permit the afflicted to go without mercy, or to perish in misery.

PRAYER.

O Thou all-loving God! whose mercy endureth forever, and whose mercies are new unto us every morning! Behold, sad and sorrowing I come into Thy most holy presence, and pour out the burden of my heart before Thee. Thou knowest the wretched state in which, alas, I lie. My soul is sorrowful, my spirit is troubled, and afflictions without number have compassed me round. I look about for help, and find none. My fellow-men either do not care to help me, or do not know my condition; nor do I care to make it

known to them. But to Thee, O God, I come with heart bowed down, and tell my woe. I know that Thou art merciful, and hast compassion upon our infirmities. Thou didst pity the poor widow who wept over her son; Thou didst have compassion on the multitude; and Thy compassion was accompanied with mercy and help. Therefore I come to Thee, and cry, Have mercy upon me.

O God, I am Thy creature; Thou wilt not desert the work of Thy hands. Yea, I am more than Thy creature: I am Thy child, whom, in holy baptism, Thou hast received into the arms of Thy mercy. Therefore I say: O my Father, have mercy upon Thy poor forsaken child. My Jesus, I have been purchased with Thy precious blood: I am Thine: therefore Thou wilt have mercy upon Thine own. O Thou blessed Holy Spirit, bear witness with my spirit, that amid all my afflictions I am yet a child of God. And if I should grow weary in praying and scarcely be able to pray any more, do Thou speak within me the "Abba, Father."

Behold I sink; O reach me Thy hand. Lord, help me; Lord, sustain me; Lord, Lord, let Thy goodness be manifested in me, and give me joy of heart. Write upon my heart, yea, speak to me constantly the words: "Thou art not forsaken: I am with thee in trouble. I will deliver

thee and honor thee." O Lord, according to Thy great mercy confirm my faith, sustain me under my afflictions, and give me new strength each day, so that my faith may not cease, my hope may not fail, and my trust in Thee may not grow weak. Thou sayest: "Is Ephraim my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord." Remember me also. Thou hast promised me grace. I too am Thy child; have mercy upon me. Thou hast never yet forsaken me; O forsake me not now. Help Thy child who seeks refuge in Thy mercy alone. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

O hear me, Lord, for I am poor,
And seek salvation at Thy door;
Bow down Thy gentle ear to me,
Who am opprest with misery.

Let mercy come from God on high,
The object of my daily cry;
I daily knock, I daily wait,
For mercy's alms, at mercy's gate.

Thou, Lord, art good, and Thou dost stand
With sealèd pardons in Thy hand;
O how the dews of mercy fall,
And answer at Thy people's call!

Lord, guide me in Thy secret way:
With such a Guide I shall not stray:
Bring me into a heavenly frame,
Unite my heart to fear Thy name.

O King of nations, Lord of all,
Before Thee shall all nations fall;
And every language shall confess
Thy glorious everlastingness.

—*John Mason, 1692. a.*

THE AFFLICTED PERSON MEDITATES UPON THE DIVINE PROMISES.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 91: 14-16. Because He hath set His love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set Him on high, because He hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with Him in trouble. I will deliver Him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show Him my salvation.

HOWEVER greatly affliction, misfortune and sorrow may depress us, the gracious promises of God have equal power to raise us up. Hence the afflicted person should remember (1) that all the divine promises are meant for him also. We are not to imagine that the promises are meant only for Moses, or David, or others who were alive at the time the promises were given. No; they are directed to us.

For St. Paul says (Rom. 15: 4): "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

Further, the afflicted one (2) should remember that all the promises of God will be fulfilled at the time which God has chosen. Consequently he must not attempt to prescribe times and seasons to God, but in patience and faith wait for God's help. (3) He should remember that the promises of God, to give help, redemption, deliverance, and freedom from all ills, are sometimes fulfilled in this life, so that the sick become well, the sorrowful glad, the afflicted delivered, the grief-stricken comforted; but that oftentimes God fulfils His promises only in the next world, where all that He has promised shall be gloriously accomplished. In view of these things, (4) the afflicted person should be patient, and hope in the goodness of God, who has already fulfilled His promises unto so many thousands.

. PRAYER.

O Lord, my God! When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. In my grief I know not where to seek for comfort and counsel but with Thee. Thou hast ever been my Help. Especially do I seek comfort in Thy precious promises. In them

I find the living fountain to refresh my weary soul. I come into Thy sanctuary, and seek in Thy holy Word the manna which shall still the hunger of my soul, and the living water which shall quench its thirst.

Thou hast said: "I will be with thee in trouble, I will deliver thee." O Lord, the troubles of my heart are enlarged; O bring Thou me out of my distresses. Thou hast said: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." Thou hast said: "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee." O Lord, have mercy upon me now. O, depart not from me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; uphold me with Thy free Spirit.

O my Lord and God, I know that Thou in heaven art faithful and true to all that Thou hast promised. If Thy word did not comfort me, I should perish in my affliction. Though my heart is full of sorrow, yet Thy consolations refresh my soul. Thy Word shows me that Thou art a mighty God, a loving Father, a strong and gracious Helper, a sure Deliverer. In this I trust; in this I find consolation. My heart is content and undismayed; and I wait for the Lord. Therefore be not disheartened, O my soul:

the Lord will not forsake thee utterly. He afflicts thee, indeed; but He will have mercy upon thee according to His loving-kindness.

Then why art Thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption. Gladden my afflicted soul, strengthen my weary soul, uphold my sinking soul, raise up my down-cast soul, comfort my sorrowful soul. Take me into Thy arms and console me. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. I long for Thee, my soul doth long. I sigh: "When wilt Thou comfort me?" In Thee I trust. To Thee I commit body and soul, and all that I have and am. Deal with me as seemeth good in Thy sight. Amen.

HYMN.

6, 6, 4, 6, 6, 6, 4.

My faith looks up to Thee,

Thou Lamb of Calvary,

Saviour Divine!

Now hear me while I pray;

Take all my guilt away;

O let me from this day

Be wholly Thine.

May Thy rich grace impart

Strength to my fainting heart,

My zeal inspire;

As Thou hast died for me,
O may my love to Thee
Pure, warm, and changeless be,
A living fire.

While life's dark maze I tread,
And griefs around me spread,
Be Thou my Guide:
Bid darkness turn to day,
Wipe sorrow's tears away,
Nor let me ever stray
From Thee aside.

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold, sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll;
Blest Saviour, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above,
A ransomed soul.

— Ray Palmer, 1830.

THE AFFLICTED PERSON MEDITATES
UPON GOD'S PURPOSE IN SEND-
ING AFFLICTION.

MEDITATION.

Heb. 12: 11. No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

WHEN a child is chastised by his father, he weeps, and regards his sufferings as an affliction. It is therefore not to be wondered at, that afflicted persons often do not know how to regard their cross.

One who is afflicted (1) should remember, that God does not purpose to ruin but to save us through the cross. When the surgeon cuts into a wound or opens a sore, he does so in order to cleanse and heal. And so God desires through affliction to draw us from the world to Himself. (2) When God sees that we are setting our affection upon the things of earth, He takes them away, in order that we may love Him alone, and find our delight in Him. Yea, if He sees that, on account of uninterrupted prosperity and quietness and good fortune, we become negligent in prayer and cold in devotion to Him, He lets us become troubled and sorrowful for a while, in order that we may long for Him again and

may seek to grow in the love and knowledge of God. But with all this, He remains a gracious, almighty, wise, and merciful God, who loves us fervently.

PRAYER.

O my God, who hast plunged me into sadness and gloom till my heart is filled with anxiety, my mouth with sighing, my eyes with tears! I know not whither to turn. Was I not happy and content? Did I not enjoy rest and quietness? Whence then this unrest?

O, my distress is great. But I will not on that account flee from Thee, my Shepherd. As Thou hast depressed me by this heavy blow, so do Thou raise me up again by Thy powerful Word, that I may reflect upon the reason why Thou hast sent me this affliction. I know for a certainty that this cross which Thou hast sent me is not meant for my ruin nor intended to do my soul any harm. O, no, Thou gracious Giver of life, my Father; it is not Thy purpose to destroy me, nor to visit Thy wrath upon me. Thou hast sent me this distress, that Thou mightest prove my love, and see whether I will love Thee in evil as well as in good days. Thou desirest to test my faith, and to prove whether I believe that Thou art an almighty, wise and merciful God, who canst deliver me out of my distresses and preserve me in the midst of them. Thou desirest to

test my patience, and see whether I will bear the cross to Thy glory. Thou wouldest prove my trust: whether I will trust in Thee above all things, and confide in Thy grace, love and mercy. Thou wouldest prove my hope: whether I will hope when there seems to be nothing to hope for, and implicitly trust Thy Word and promise.

Yea, my gracious God and Father, Thou wouldest draw me away from the world, its lusts, sins, and habits, and wouldest have me turn to Thee, and cling only to Thee. Thou takest from me my joy, that I may find my joy in Thee alone. Thou takest from me what delighted my soul, that I may regard Thee as my highest good and dearest treasure. 'Tis well! I will become what Thou wouldest have me be; I will bear what Thou dost lay upon me. Grant me Thy Holy Spirit that He may impart to me the needful grace and strength. Without Thee I can not bear my cross; but through Thy Holy Spirit and Thy gracious help I can overcome. I will be patient and endure quietly as long as Thou wilt have me endure. I will, also, cut loose from the world and worldly associations, and cling to Thee alone, that I may be one in Spirit with Thee. Thus shall this cross purify me, and be a great benefit to my soul. In Thine own time Thou wilt send me deliverance. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform:
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take:
The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace:
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.

His purposes will ripen fast,
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His works in vain.
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain.

— *William Cowper, 1773.*

THE AFFLICTED PERSON PRAYS FOR
PATIENCE AND STRENGTH.

MEDITATION.

Heb. 10: 35, 36. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

PATIENCE is a fruit of faith. It comes from God; and hence we should pray for it.

The more the afflicted person suffers, the more earnestly and vehemently he should pray; as it is written of Christ, "And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly."

The afflicted person should bear in mind, (1) that patience means to bear his cross meekly and submit to God's will. He knows that His affliction comes from God, and that God can take it away. He knows that, though he suffers affliction, God still loves him fervently, and has not ceased to be his Father. Therefore the afflicted person (2) should not murmur against God, though he suffer long and greatly, but say: I will hold my peace and not open my mouth; Thou wilt do all things well. (3) If he becomes discouraged by his severe pains and his many sorrows, he must pray to God for strength. God strengthens the afflicted by assuring them, that their affliction will soon end, and that He will

not forsake them ; and by alleviating their sufferings. (4) In this way the afflicted person will again become strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. He should be on his guard against impatience. For God has promised to help us bear our cross ; but He has not promised to bear our impatience, because impatience is not from Him but from our own flesh. Patience alone brings true quietness of heart and mind.

PRAYER.

Lord, all my desire is before Thee ; and my groaning is not hid from Thee. Yea, my God, my groaning is not hid from Thee, and my misery and distress are well known to Thee. This is my consolation, that I know my affliction comes from Thy hands. I have not brought it on myself ; Thou hast laid it upon me.

But since this is the case, do Thou help me to bear it. And as patience is one of Thy good gifts which come down from above, O Father of lights, grant it to me according to Thy loving-kindness. If Thou dost strengthen and help and sustain me, then I can bear and endure all. I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me. Let not my burden become too heavy for me nor the trial too great. Have patience with my weakness ; strengthen the weary hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to my trembling heart :

“Thy God is King, thy Jesus is with thee, thy King cometh to thee with a recompense; He will come and save thee.” If Thou dost help me, I am helped indeed.

Therefore help me, O my Saviour, for Thy name’s sake. I seek refuge in Thee. Let me recognize it as Thy holy will that I should suffer as I do, and have my cross to bear; so that I may bear it cheerfully, and say: Father, not my will but Thine be done. Give me the assurance that amid all my affliction and sorrow Thou still lovest me; that my sufferings shall endure for a short season only and not forever; yea, that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. Help me to bear in mind, that Thou art my gracious God and loving Father, and that my cross is not a sign of Thy wrath but of Thy love. Convince me of its beneficent purpose by drawing me closer to Thee.

O Lord, hold up before my soul the example of my dear Saviour Jesus Christ, who patiently endured all things, and, like a lamb before its shearers, opened not His mouth. Give me grace to follow the example of His meekness and submission. Grant that I may suffer with Him, that I may also be glorified together with Him. Let not my cross drive Thy Word from my heart, nor weaken my faith, nor hinder my prayers; but

give me new strength and new courage whenever I must weather a new storm or have just passed through one. Yea, assure me that Thou wilt soon come to my rescue, and wilt certainly help and sustain me. Amen.

HYMN.

6s. D.

My Jesus, as Thou wilt!
O may Thy will be mine!
Into Thy hand of love
I would my all resign.
Through sorrow or through joy
Conduct me as Thine own,
And help me still to say,
My Lord, Thy will be done!

My Jesus, as Thou wilt!
Though seen through many a tear,
Let not my star of hope
Grow dim or disappear.
Since Thou on earth hast wept
And sorrowed oft alone,
If I must weep with Thee,
My Lord, Thy will be done.

My Jesus, as Thou wilt!
When death itself draws nigh,
To Thy dear wounded side
I would for refuge fly;
Leaning on Thee to go
Where Thou before hast gone:
The rest as Thou shalt please;
O Lord, Thy will be done!

My Jesus, as Thou wilt!
 All shall be well for me:
 Each changing future scene
 I gladly trust with Thee.
 Thus to my home above
 I travel calmly on,
 And sing, in life or death,
 My Lord, Thy will be done!

— *Benjamin Schmolck. 1704.*

James Borthwick, Tr. 1853.

THE AFFLICTED PERSON PRAYS FOR THE ALLEVIATION OF HIS SUFFERINGS.

MEDITATION.

Isa. 38: 14, 17. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness: but Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.

GOD has promised His children the alleviation of their sufferings, either in this world or in the next. Afflicted persons are not forbidden, therefore, to pray for this alleviation in this life; but they are to do so in such a manner as to submit themselves entirely to God's will. Consequently, (1) when they experience the severity, bitterness, and tediousness

of their cross, they dare very well pray that God may be pleased to remove it; for this is what Christ, our Saviour, Himself did, when He prayed to His Father for the removal of the bitter cup. In this way afflicted persons manifest their trust and confidence in the almighty power of God.

Nevertheless, (2) this prayer for the removal of the cross must be connected with a meek submission to the will of God. It is better for us to bear willingly the cross which God sends, than to have Him remove it on account of our murmuring, and in His wrath send a heavier one upon us. This prayer for the removal of affliction (3) should have a good purpose, namely, that we may be enabled to serve God more joyfully and unhindered, inasmuch as affliction often distracts our mind, discourages us, and unfits us for holy exercises. But if we desire to be rid of the cross from impatience, or in order to enjoy the pleasures and lusts of the world, we can readily see that God will not hear such prayer. If the heart is still carnal, vain, and earthly, He lets the cross remain till, like a holy fire, it has destroyed these stubbles and impurities.

PRAYER.

O gracious God, who beholdest the afflicted and miserable, and whose tender mercies are over all Thy works! Behold, a poor, afflicted soul, I stand before the throne of Thy grace, and beseech Thy help. Thou knowest how Thou hast afflicted me; Thou knowest how Thou hast tried me; and Thou knowest also that no one can remove my affliction but Thou alone. The Father-hand which has wounded me must heal me; He who has slain me must make me alive again; yea, He who has led me into the depths of hell must lead me forth again.

Therefore, O gracious God, I come to Thee, and say: Lord, help me; Lord, have mercy upon me. Thy wrath is but for a moment, and Thou takest pleasure in life; but Thy moment is almost too long for me. Merciful God, Thou who in Thy Word hast so graciously permitted Thy children to pray to Thee, saying to them: "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you:" let my asking and seeking and knocking find acceptance with Thee. Remove my affliction from me; yet not my will, but Thine be done.

I do not desire to prescribe to Thee the day or the hour or the manner in which Thou shalt help: I will patiently wait for Thee. But I be-

seech Thee, let me experience Thy quickening grace. If Thou wilt not entirely remove my affliction, remove a part of it. For a small moment Thou dost hide Thy face from Thy believers, but with great mercies wilt Thou gather them.

O God, how long wilt Thou forget me? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? Is Thy mercy clean gone forever? Doth Thy promise fail for evermore? O let me see that Thou art still my Father, and wilt have mercy upon me. Let me know that my fervent prayer is acceptable to Thee. O how long, how long shall my heart be anxious and long for Thee? With Thee nothing is impossible; the Lord of Sabaoth is Thy name, great in wisdom and mighty in power. Thou art the consolation of Israel and the Helper in need; therefore do not forsake me, but help me, deliver me, be merciful to me. Make me glad, according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted me, and the years wherein I have seen evil. Leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.

If Thine hour to help has not yet come, strengthen me within, and grant me such a measure of grace as will enable me to bear my affliction longer for Thy glory. For if Thou, O dear Father, wilt lighten my burden or help me to bear it, so that I walk in Thy strength, I will

regard this help as being also a deliverance for which I should be glad and thankful. But if Thou wilt not remove any of my burden in this life, but wilt have me bear it until death, Thy will be done. Only let me not be tempted above that which I am able; and sweeten all my bitterness and sorrow with the enjoyment of Thy love, with Thy mighty succor, and with a quickening foretaste of heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

Psalm 31.

S. M.

My spirit on Thy care,
Blest Saviour, I recline;
Thou wilt not leave me to despair,
For Thou art Love divine.

In Thee I place my trust,
On Thee I calmly rest:
I know Thee good, I know Thee just,
And count Thy choice the best.

Whate'er events betide,
Thy will they all perform;
Safe in Thy breast my head I hide,
Nor fear the coming storm.

Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me;
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee.

— Henry Francis Lyte, 1834.

THE AFFLICTED PERSON REFLECTS
UPON THE JOYFUL END
OF HIS CROSS.

MEDITATION.

Lament. 3: 31-33. For the Lord will not cast off forever: but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

ALL affliction appears light, if we hope that it will soon come to an end. A difficult journey seems less so when it is short. An afflicted person should bear in mind (1) that his affliction will certainly come to an end, perhaps in this life, even as David's flight, Hezekiah's sickness, the widow's tears, and the palsied man's pain were turned by God into good in this life. But most certainly God will put an end to the cross of the Christians, and turn it to good, at death. For then He will give them a crown, a white robe, and the joys of heaven; then He will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

An afflicted person should bear in mind, (2) that, if he is pained by affliction, his soul is edified by it; for by means of affliction he has learned to know God's omnipotence, wisdom, love, and mercy; through suffering and its happy conclusion his confidence has been established

and his faith strengthened. And if, through the cross, the love of the world has been destroyed in him, so that he has become more pious, more devout, more Christ-like, more humble, and more meek, then his cross has certainly been of the greatest benefit to him. Thus the end and result of the cross is happy and salutary, whether it be removed in time or only in eternity.

PRAYER.

O mighty God, how great and grievous is my affliction! As Thou knowest, every day brings its evil and almost every hour its own particular pain. But my faith, my hope, my trust shall not on this account cease. In the midst of my sufferings I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help, namely, to Thee, my almighty, good, and merciful God. I know, Thou wilt at last remove my affliction and gladden my soul; after the storm Thou wilt let me see the sun again.

Thou hast promised that Thou wilt give rest to the weary and heavy-laden; and I wait for the fulfilment of this blessed promise. If it will conduce to Thy glory and my salvation, grant me the wish of my heart and the prayer of my lips; for in Thee have I trusted, O Lord, from my youth up. I know, Thy right hand can change all things. I entreat Thee, if it be Thy holy will,

change my wretched state. Refresh me, gladden me, hear me. In this will I recognize thine omnipotence, that Thou canst deliver out of the greatest and heaviest affliction. In this will I recognize Thy great goodness, that Thou, as a Father, hast compassion upon me.

Without this affliction I would perhaps have learned less true religion than I have learned with it. Now I see Thy holy counsel: Thou hast desired to make me humble, meek, and devout; Thou hast desired to draw me unto Thee, that I might find all my delight in Thee, and might place my hope in Thee alone. And since all this has been accomplished, Thou now takest away my affliction, and makest my mind, which was restless before, once more quiet, submissive, and content. O what glorious fruitage has not this bitter root brought forth! What great benefit has not come to me from my sufferings!

David's persecutions gave him the occasion to compose his glorious psalms of praise and thanksgiving. My tears shall also be a seed from which good fruit shall grow. The thorns which have pierced me shall bear roses. After the battle shall follow the victory, after the conflict the crown, after the suffering the deliverance, after the dark and gloomy night the joyful morning! For this I praise and thank Thee. Bless

the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. How glorious shall be that redemption on the last day, when I shall have been freed from all evil, and shall enter upon the joyful life of heaven! Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

God of my life, whose gracious power
Through various deaths my soul hath led;
Or turned aside the fatal hour,
Or lifted up my shaking head:

In all my ways Thy hand I own,
Thy ruling Providence I see:
O help me still my course to run,
And still direct my paths to Thee.

Whither, O whither, should I fly,
But to my loving Saviour's breast?
Secure within Thine arms to lie,
And safe beneath Thy wings to rest.

I have no skill the snare to shun;
But Thou, O Christ, my wisdom art!
I ever into ruin run;
But Thou art greater than my heart.

Foolish, and impotent, and blind,
Lead me a way I have not known;
Bring me where I my heaven may find,
The heaven of loving Thee alone.

Enlarge my heart to make Thee room,
Enter and in me ever stay:
The crooked then shall strait become;
The darkness shall be lost in day.

C. Wesley, 1740.

WIDOWS IN THEIR SORROW POUR OUT THEIR HEART BEFORE GOD.

Exod. 22: 22, 23. Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto Me, I will surely hear their cry.

“**I** AM indeed a widow woman, and mine husband is dead.” Thus the wise woman of Tekoah, a widow, described herself, 2 Sam. 14: 5. Widowhood is (1) a sad state, in which a woman is deprived of her husband’s help, counsel, comfort, presence, and kindness,—a deprivation which is felt keenly even by a rich widow, but which is felt all the more keenly by a poor one, because death has robbed her of the one person who, under the blessing of God, supported her and her children. Widowhood is (2) an afflicted state, because un-Christian persons frequently take advantage of widows, rob, oppress, despise, and injure them. But widowhood is also (3) a state which stands under God’s special protection. God has enjoined upon all

men, that they shall not harm widows and orphans, and has threatened to avenge any injury which is done to them. He has promised that He will be a husband to the widows, and their Helper and Judge, who will take their part, and bless and prosper their cause. Yes, He has promised them His special blessing, succor, help, and grace.

In view of these promises, widows (1) should not despair of God; for though their husband be dead, God is not dead. (2) They should accept their bereavement as a trial of their faith and hope in God. No one should place his trust in a creature, or depend solely upon one. If a wife imagines that no one can support her and her children but her husband, she makes an idol of him; and for this reason God desires to make her free from this sin, and to show her that He can preserve and support her and her children without her husband. Therefore all Christian widows should (3) persevere in prayer, and not be dissatisfied, but should serve God earnestly, and lead a pious, quiet, and Christian life. Then God will abundantly support, nourish, and sustain them.

PRAYER.

O merciful and gracious God, who art the Refuge of the afflicted, the forsaken and the distressed! It has pleased Thee, in accordance with

Thy holy and inscrutable will, to make me a widow. My sun is gone down at noonday, the roof of my house is fallen. I am a woman deeply afflicted; my husband is dead. Whither shall I turn? Where shall I seek counsel and help? O my God, I come to Thee. When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

Thou hast promised in Thy holy Word, that Thou wilt be the Judge of the widow and the Father of the fatherless: "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is His name." O be now my Husband, my Judge, my Helper, my Deliverer, my Refuge, and the Father of my children. Look upon my tears, as they roll down my cheeks, and let their supplication rise to heaven and be heard. Behold my sighing, and have mercy upon me. Grant me grace to know that, although I must live without my husband, I am not forsaken by Thee; and that, although my husband be buried, Thou, O eternal and immortal God, art not dead but livest eternally.

O, it seems as if Thou purposest by this affliction to draw my thoughts away from all creatures, that I may place my trust and hope in Thee alone. My God and Father, I believe from the heart that Thou canst protect and nourish and support me and mine without a husband. Strengthen my faith according to Thy grace and

mercy. Show me a token for good; lead me as Thou didst Naomi; provide for me as Thou didst for Ruth; bless my pot of oil as Thou didst that of the widow in Israel; let not the barrel of meal waste nor the cruise of oil fail for me, even as it failed not for the widow at Zarephath. Wipe away my tears, and say unto me: "Weep not," as Thou saidst to the widow at Nain.

O Lord, provide for my daily necessities, bless my going out and my coming in, preserve me from harm, and provide for me and mine according to Thy promise. I place all my dependence on Thee, Thou living God; I trust in Thee with all my heart and soul. Thou art all-wise; Thou knowest how to preserve me: Thou art almighty; Thou art able to protect me. Thou art rich enough to sustain and provide for me; Thou art merciful enough to give me all that I need. Thou art present everywhere, and canst assist, help, and deliver me. If the traveller depends upon his guide to show him the way, and the sick person entrusts his body and life to the care of the physician, why should not I, O almighty and all-wise God, trust in Thee, and cast myself upon Thy care? Help me, O God of my salvation, for Thy name's sake. When my father and mother forsake me, Thou, Lord, wilt take me up. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but Thou hast

in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts and gracious promises delight my soul.

Grant me grace to spend the days of my lonely widowhood in faith and righteousness, to find my joy and delight in Thee, and to give offense to none. I know full well, that she who serves God will be comforted after affliction, delivered out of trouble, and find grace after her chastenings. Therefore let me also find with Thee, O God, grace after suffering, help after affliction, joy after tears, comfort after sadness. Turn all my enemies into friends, and give me grace and favor with all people. Hear my prayer, grant me Thy blessing, lead me by Thy hand, and provide for me and mine according to Thy gracious promise. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; therefore Thou wilt now be my Guard and Shield. Thou wilt preserve me and do good unto me, till Thou shalt bring me to eternal glory, where, with joyful lips, I shall praise Thee for evermore. Amen.

HYMN.

11, 10.

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;

Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel;

Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your
anguish;—

Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,

Hope, when all others die, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,

Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot cure.

Here see the bread of life; see waters flowing

Forth from the throne of God, pure from
above;

Come to the feast of love; come, ever knowing

Earth has no sorrow but Heaven can remove.

Vs. 1. 2, Thomas Moore, 1816.

V. 3, Thomas Hastings, 1831-32.

FORSAKEN ORPHANS TELL THEIR TROUBLES TO GOD.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 27: 10. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.

IF any state be sad, that of the orphans certainly is, when, deprived of father and mother, they are compelled to live among strangers, and to eke out an existence by service. But while the state is a sad one, it is one which will bring great good to the soul, if the orphans fear God. For children who have been deprived of father and mother should remember (1) that, though they have no parents on earth, they have a rich Father in heaven, who has adopted them as His own in Holy Baptism. This heavenly

Father of theirs will never die; He is rich, and possesses all things which they need; He is mighty, and able to give them all things; He is an all-wise God, who knows how to carry out his beneficent purposes.

Pious orphans should remember (2) that God often takes parents away in order to show how He can preserve, nourish, and support poor and forsaken children without their father and mother; yea, how He can bring them to honor, and bless them abundantly. He has already furnished thousands of examples of orphans who with joyful lips could declare with Jacob: "I had nothing but this staff when I passed over the Jordan. I started out in life with nothing but poverty and life itself; and therefore all that I now have is the gift of God."

Orphans should, however, (3) cling fast to God in faith, be humble in their demeanor toward all, be industrious, prayerful, diligent in attending the services in the Church, attentive to God's Word, chaste in life, upright in conduct, faithful in all their dealings, and honest in all their actions. They should, in particular, keep the fear of God before their eyes and in their heart, and not consent to any sin, nor act contrary to God's commandments. If they thus conduct themselves, God will certainly not forsake them, but will lead them wonderfully and gloriously,

so that they shall have reason to praise His almighty power and love all the days of their life.

PRAYER.

O gracious and merciful God and Father! I poor, forsaken child cast myself before Thy exalted throne, and, in all humility and sincerity of heart, I pray Thee to take me into Thy Fatherly care. Alas, it has pleased Thee in Thy wise counsel to deprive me of the care and training of my parents! And now, whither shall I go? I am an orphan; I no longer have a father! Who will now care for me? I therefore come to Thee, O loving God and Father. Do Thou care for me, do Thou have compassion on me. I was cast upon Thee from the womb; Thou hast been my trust from my youth. Behold my father and my mother forsake me; but do Thou, O Lord, take me up.

O my God, who feedest the birds which fly over the fields, who clothest the flowers, and providest for the wild beasts of the forest: Thou wilt also, as a faithful Father, care for me, have mercy upon me, and be gracious unto me. Mine eyes turn to Thee. I lift up mine eyes unto the hills, whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. I know that I am not forsaken by Thee, though I be forsaken by men. O how many examples

there are of children whose parents Thou didst permit to die, but whom Thou didst nevertheless gloriously lead, provide for, and sustain.

O God, who didst draw Moses out of the water, look upon me, who am almost overwhelmed by the waves of affliction. O Lord Jesus, who didst care for little children and bless them: bless me also; take me into the arms of Thy mercy, carry me, and preserve me from harm. O blessed Holy Spirit, who leadest the believing and the youth, lead me also. Show me Thy ways O Lord; lead me in Thy truth. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. O Triune God, be Thou my Preserver to guard me, my Helper to support me, my Guide to accompany me when I go out and in. Provide me with good friends wherever I may go; raise up well-wishers and benefactors who shall pity my wretchedness. Let my guardians be filled with love toward me. Do good to them also according to Thy mercy, preserve them from harm, and recompense to them in temporal, spiritual, and heavenly blessings whatever good they do to me.

Give me a humble and obedient heart, that I may not lose the favor and benefactions of my well-wishers through my obstinacy, vicious conduct, malice, or wickedness. Guard me against temptations, that I may not by reason of my poverty deny Thee or fall from the faith; and

help me to increase constantly in the knowledge and love of Thee. Let Thy good Spirit always lead, sanctify, rule, and keep me, lest I be led by evil company into wilful sin. Let me not fall into carousing or unchastity; and preserve me from a perverse heart.

O gracious God and Father, make me afraid to follow godless ways; warn me when I am in danger of going astray; remind me of my duty when I am tempted to seek that which is evil; uphold me when I fall; bring me back to the right path when I would wander from it; strengthen me when I am weak; restore me to health when I am sick. O faithful God and Father, I commit myself entirely into Thy hands. Do Thou watch over my going out and my coming in. Then will I thank and praise Thee for all Thy goodness. My tongue shall say: This God hath wrought: God has blessed, preserved, accompanied, guided, and sustained me. I will tell abroad how Thou hast shown Thyself a gracious Father to me.

O Lord, Lord, hear the prayer of the forsaken orphan, hear the voice of Thy child. Thou art become my Father in Holy Baptism; into Thy arms my parents laid me after my earthly birth. Thou art a rich and immortal Father, an all-wise and loving Father; therefore be gracious to Thy child. I know Thou art able and willing to help me; therefore, O Lord, help me for Thy

goodness' sake, that I may, at last, be able to say to Thy praise: The Lord hath done great things for me; whereof I am glad. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

Thou very present Aid
In suffering and distress!
The soul which still on Thee is stayed
Is kept in perfect peace.

The soul by faith reclined
On his Redeemer's breast,
Midst raging storms exults to find
An everlasting rest.

Sorrow and fear are gone,
Whene'er Thy face appears;
It stills the sighing orphan's moan,
And dries the widow's tears.

It hallows every cross,
It sweetly comforts me;
Makes me forget my every loss,
And find my all in Thee.

Peace to the troubled heart,
Health to the sin-sick mind;
The wounded spirit's balm Thou art,
The Healer of mankind.

Jesus, to whom I fly,
Doth all my wishes fill;
In vain created streams are dry,
I have the Fountain still.

Stript of my earthly friends,
 I find them all in One;
 And peace, and joy that never ends,
 And heaven, in Christ alone.

C. Wesley, 1749. a.

THE AFFLICTED PERSON COMPLAINS OF THE WEAKNESS OF HIS FAITH.

MEDITATION.

Isa. 42: 3. A bruised reed shall He not break,
 and the smoking flax shall He not quench.

Luke 17: 5. Lord, increase our faith.

IF there be anything that can frighten the believing soul, it is the thought that it does not pray properly, that it has no faith at all, or that its faith is not a true, living faith; and that consequently its salvation is doubtful.

For such anxious souls there is comfort in the fact, (1) that a prayer uttered in the name of Jesus and in reliance upon His blood and righteousness is a true prayer, and that a weak faith is just as true and saving a faith as a strong one. A little child is just as truly a human being as a large and strong man. Again, if we earnestly desire to believe, (2) such a desire is already faith, because it is a result of the operation of the Holy Spirit. A godless person does not desire to believe. (3) A weak faith grasps

Christ, His holy merit and His wounds, just as a strong faith does. If we place a gold coin into the hand of a child or of a strong man, one has as much as the other. (4) Satan cannot extinguish the light of faith in the heart, because he cannot even put out the light of a lamp at night. (5) Although we do not always feel the same joyfulness in prayer, faith is still present, just as a spark or ember is present under the ashes, though it be not seen.

The certain proof that we have faith (6) is found in the existence of the conflict and hatred against sin. From this conflict proceed the fruits of faith (Gal. 5:22): love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, temperance; and such anxious souls fear to speak or to do evil. Where these things are found in a person, there there is faith and the Holy Spirit; for these things are not fruits of the flesh, (Gal. 5:19) but of faith and of the Holy Spirit. Faith and the Holy Spirit are inseparable. (7) Prayer, reading of the Holy Scriptures, patience, waiting upon God, — these strengthen faith. (8) Faith is a gift of God; and God will not demand more of you than He has given you. (9) Christ also died for those whose faith is weak, and prays for them that their faith fail not. And even if you cannot believe this, it is nevertheless true, because the Scriptures say it.

PRAYER.

O gracious God, I know from Thy Holy Word that faith alone saves, and that without faith it is impossible to please Thee. But because I am anxious to please Thee and to be saved, I am alarmed at myself when I find at times so very little faith in my heart. Therefore do Thou kindle within my spirit the light of true faith, that I may know Thee, the only true God, as Thou hast revealed Thyself in Thy Word; and that I may from the heart believe Thy revealed Word, and accept with firm trust and unshaken confidence the promises of Thy grace and of the forgiveness of sins which Jesus has acquired for me.

At times I think that I do not pray aright; that I have no faith at all; or that I shall not continue in the faith to the end. And I bring this complaint before Thee, my God, because I know that every good gift and every perfect gift cometh down from above. Because not all men have faith, and faith is Thy gift, I pray Thee, strengthen my weak faith. The bruised reed Thou wilt not break, and the smoking flax Thou wilt not quench. My God, engrave in my heart this comfort, that a prayer based on the merit, blood, and death of Jesus is a true prayer; and that a weak faith which clings to Thee, O Triune God, namely, to Thee, O heavenly Father, as our

Creator, to Thee, O Jesus, as our only Redeemer and Saviour, and to Thee, O Holy Spirit as our Sanctifier and Comforter, is also a faith which is pleasing to Thee, and which saves.

Grant also, if it be Thy will, that I may perceive the presence of faith in me through joyfulness in prayer, a comforting sense of Thy grace, and a joyful hope. O my Jesus, intercede for me as Thou didst for Peter, that my faith fail not. Seal in me the consolation, that I have been purchased with Thy precious blood, and have been adopted as Thy child in Holy Baptism; that my weak prayer is acceptable to God for the sake of Thy holy intercession; that **Thy** blood was shed for me also; and that I am justified and saved by Thee.

And do Thou, O blessed Holy Spirit, work in me the true fruits of faith; prompt me, sanctify me, rule me; yea, dwell in me, and bear witness with my spirit that I am truly a child of God. Blessed be Thy holy name, that I find in myself a repugnance to sin, that I mourn over it and fight against it in prayer; and that, on the other hand, I have a heart-felt desire to live for Thee alone, to serve and obey Thee; for from these things I see that Thou still dwellest in me. Increase and preserve in me these fruits of faith, and cause them to become each day more sweet

and precious to me. If Thou wilt grant me this, O Triune God, I will gladly be satisfied with my weak faith. Amen.

THE AFFLICTED PERSON COMPLAINS
OF SINFUL, EVIL, AND BLAS-
PHEMOUS THOUGHTS.

MEDITATION.

2 Cor. 12: 7-9. The messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.

IT is sad to hear a sick person complain of pain in all the members of his body; but it is still more sad when tempted souls must complain of sinful, evil, and blasphemous thoughts. For such afflicted souls there is comfort in the fact, (1) that spiritual trials, sadness, terror, and anxiety of soul come upon us in accordance with the will of God. For without God's will not a hair can fall from our head; how much less could such anxiety of soul come upon us.

Pious Christians, the children of God, (2) perceive these evil and horrible thoughts, and are frightened by them. The ungodly have them

also, but laugh at them. (3) That the godly are frightened by them is a proof that they sincerely love God, that they stand in His grace and in the faith, and for this reason cannot bear to have such evil thoughts arise in their hearts. (4) This terror, this anxiety on account of blasphemous thoughts, is a sign that Jesus and the Holy Ghost still dwell in the heart. If Satan dwelt there, as the tempted ones imagine, they would not become frightened by such thoughts.

But (5) such blasphemous thoughts God does not charge against the souls of the pious, (a) because these thoughts arise contrary to their will, (b) because they mourn over them, (c) because they take no pleasure in them, (d), because they are filled with dismay when such thoughts come, and (e) because they resist them. (6) Temptation is not a sign of God's wrath, but of His grace. Such souls, notwithstanding their temptations, have a gracious God, as we see in the case of Job. God has not departed from them. He is still in their heart, but He hides Himself from them. (7) The soul, like a house into which fire-balls are cast, is passive and not active when such thoughts come. Therefore such a person should keep silent and not give utterance in words to the evil thoughts, nor relate them to foolish persons, lest he cause offense. (8) He should always resist, and say: "It is not true; I

am not condemned. Satan is condemned; I am redeemed. The evil word is not mine; I do not approve of it. Away with it from my heart. I am God's, and God is mine. Who is it that shall part us?" (9) He should not permit blasphemous thoughts to prevent him from praying and from reading God's Word, but should pray and read all the more.

Because such souls declare (10) that they would rather walk on thorns or suffer pain of body than be troubled with such thoughts, and because they keep on their guard against sins and wicked works, it is clear beyond all doubt that faith, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, yea, the Holy Trinity, are still in their heart. (11) Even if, on account of their evil thoughts, they cannot pray nor let their thoughts dwell upon God, their complaint is in itself a prayer, and their sighing after God a certain sign of His presence. For the desire after God comes from indwelling grace, and their sighing and complaint constitute the most vehement, earnest, and powerful prayers.

Though they imagine (12) that they displease God in all that they do, God does not regard them unfavorably, but looks upon their will and desire. They imagine that they are the ones who are the very farthest from God; yet they are the ones who are nearest to Him. They imagine that

they are the most wicked; yet they are the most faithful. They imagine that they are the rejected ones; yet they are the dearest. (13) They should patiently endure; for there is no instance in which God forsook such persons. He gladdens, quickens, and comforts them again. But we must wait till the proper time comes, just as we must wait till a disease has run its course. In time this spiritual disease gradually abates and finally ceases, as the experience of pious persons in the past has proved.

These temptations (14) make man humble, devout, cautious, and pious, so that he will not readily do or say what is evil. They purify the heart from evil habits and vices, and from lukewarmness in prayer, and increase its interest in the hearing of God's Word. Is not this a blessed result?

These reasons (15) we should contemplate one after another, or have them further explained by friends of God. At the same time, we should use such medicine as may be needful to improve the condition of our bodily health, keep ourselves employed, take walks in the company of Christian persons out in the open air, in the garden, or in the country, and, except when we want to pray, avoid being alone. We should seek the society of other Christian people, children, and servants, as much as possible. To join others in

singing will be edifying also. We should frequently read the eighth chapter of Romans, and the twenty-seventh and eighty-eighth Psalm.

PRAYER.

O Thou Holy God, who inhabitest the praises of Israel, and whom all the holy angels and the elect unceasingly praise and exalt! Distressed in soul I deeply lament to Thee, that I am greatly hindered in Thy worship by evil and blasphemous thoughts, which so frequently and almost daily arise in my heart. Thou, all-knowing God, knowest well that they fall upon me like flying arrows; and that they distress and terrify me. Thou knowest that I am grieved by them, and weep bitterly when these fiery arrows pierce me.

O my God, do not charge to my account what takes place against my will: Thou seest how I fight and wrestle, how I pray against such thoughts, what a horror I have of them, and how gladly I would banish them from my heart. O Lord, let not Thy hand be too heavy upon me, lest I perish. I will cheerfully drink the cup which Thou, O dear Father, pourest out for me. Only let it not be a cup of wrath, but a cup of grace. O have mercy upon me; for I am weak.

O how I tremble when I notice that the evil thoughts are approaching again! O do not cast me off on account of them; for I cannot prevent

them. This is my infirmity; but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. Quicken me, O Triune God; and when the evil hour and the anguish are past, let me experience Thy holy presence and Thy rich consolations. In the midst of my anguish speak a word of comfort to my heart, that I may cling to it and by its means rise and defend myself bravely. Should this affliction endure long, grant me also great patience and strength. Let not my faith fail, but bear witness with my spirit that I am nevertheless Thy child and an heir of everlasting life.

And now, my God, I will cheerfully endure these temptations, because I know that Thou hast sent them, not for my destruction, but for the purpose of awakening me unto righteousness, of purifying me from sin, evil habits, and worldly ways, and sanctifying my life. Shall I not drink the cup which my Father has placed to my lips? Does it not come from loving hands? This fire is meant to burn the evil lusts and the old Adam out of my heart, and to consecrate it to Thee, O mighty God, as a temple and dwelling-place. Therefore in the midst of my distress I say: Thou art still my Father, my Deliverer, my Helper, and my Defense. Grant me the power of Thy Holy Spirit to strengthen me for the fight, and to help me to overcome.

Thou hast said, that none who wait on Thee shall be ashamed. In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust; let me never be ashamed: deliver me in Thy righteousness; deliver me speedily. Be Thou my strong rock, for an house of defense to save me. For Thy name's sake lead me and guide me. Thou hast said that Thy kindness shall not depart from me, and that mercy shall be built up forever. O Lord, Lord, let now the light of Thy grace arise and fill my heart with joy. O my Father, let the hour come in which Thou wilt take away this distress of soul. Strengthen me, help me. Guard my heart as with a wall, keep watch over it as over the house of Job, that at last the evil thoughts may no longer enter; yea, that I may, through Thy power, learn to despise them. O faithful God, Thou wilt not let me be tempted above that I am able! Alleviate my distress, and I will regard that as a help, till at last Thou shalt free me from it entirely. O Jesus, Thou fountain of all grace, who castest out none who come to Thee in their weakness, but givest comfort to all: let me find grace in Thy sight. Amen.

HYMN.

10s.

Weary of earth, and laden with my sin,
I look at heaven, and long to enter in :
But there no evil thing may find a home ;
And yet I hear a voice that bids me come.

So vile I am, how dare I hope to stand
In the pure glory of that holy land,
Before the whiteness of that throne appear ?
Yet there are hands outstretched to draw me
near.

The while I fain would tread the heavenly way,
Seems ever evil with me day by day :
Yet on mine ears the gracious tidings fall,
Repent, confess, thou shalt be loosed from all.

It is the voice of Jesus that I hear ;
His are the hands stretched out to draw me near ;
And His the blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the throne.

'Twas He who found me on the deathly wild,
And made me heir of heaven, the Father's child,
And day by day, whereby my soul may live,
Gives me His grace of pardon, and will give.

O Great Absolver, grant my soul may wear
The lowliest garb of penitence and prayer,
That in Thy Father's courts my glorious dress
May be the garment of Thy righteousness.

Samuel J. Stone, 1866.

BOOK III.

FOR THE USE OF THE SICK.

MORNING PRAYER OF A SICK PERSON.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 55: 16, 17. As for me, I will call upon God; and the Lord shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice.

IF God should permit us to become ill, we should not on that account cease praying. On the contrary we should pray all the more earnestly. The more our illness increases, the more fervently we should pray, just as the Saviour did. For we read of Him in Luke 22: 44: "And being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly."

When God has cast any person upon a bed of sickness, such a person (1) should at the dawn of day lift up his heart to God, and praise Him for the protection vouchsafed during the night. If the night has been a painful and restless one, he should pray God for help. If the night has been restful and comfortable, he should give

God thanks. Having thus turned his thoughts to God, he should (2) bring his supplications before Him, and commend himself to God's care and protection through the day. He should think often of God, and patiently bear whatever God sends.

At the same time he should (3) remember, that Jesus is by his sick-bed to quicken and strengthen, to teach and instruct him. Perhaps the sick person, before he was taken ill, was negligent in attending divine services and remiss in his prayers. If so, God now desires, by laying bare his faults, to teach him to pray more earnestly, and to realize that he is lacking in comfort and consolation just because he neglected, in days of health, to gather a fund of comforting Scripture-passages and prayers. If, on the other hand, the sick person is one who has loved God and His Word, God desires to show him how he may now put into practice what he has learned concerning 'patience, trust in God, resignation, and submission to God's will.

PRAYER.

O Thou Holy Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost! I come before Thy holy throne in this morning hour, and thank Thee that Thou hast let me live to see this day. Thou knowest,

Lord, that I have spent the night in this sick-bed. And yet I cannot sufficiently praise Thy goodness for permitting me to behold again the light of the sun, and letting the pain and the discomfort pass away. O God of love! I thank Thee for Thy protection and help. Thine eye kept watch over me, Thy hand shielded me, Thy grace preserved me.

O my God! The sun now rises again; let Thy grace shine upon me anew. Grant me with this day new strength, new grace, and new patience to bear my sufferings willingly. O Lord, my God! It has pleased Thee to lay me upon this bed of sickness. Thy will be done; I will remain here as long as it pleases Thee to have it so. Perhaps Thou wouldest by this means cut me loose from sinful habits and from my ordinary occupation, in order that Thou mayest speak with me, and teach me how I should care for my soul. Now I have time to examine into my past life and see whether I have served, honored, and obeyed Thee. Thou wouldest have me to mourn over my sins, to be filled with shame before Thee, sincerely to repent, to renew my covenant with Thee, and henceforth to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling.

Grant, O Jesus, that through the entire day I may direct my heart to Thee, pray fervently,

think of Thy wounds, Thy blood and Thy death, and reflect upon the true happiness and the eternal salvation of my soul. Speak to my heart one comforting Scripture verse after another, to assure me of Thy Fatherly love, to seal Thy grace unto me, and to persuade me of Thy speedy help. Preserve me to-day against sudden accidents, new pains, gloomy hours, and every manner of suffering. Refresh me in my faintness and strengthen me in my weakness through Thy Holy Spirit. If, however, Thou shouldest be pleased to let me endure pain and suffering, then be with me and forsake me not. Help me to bring the day to a happy and blessed end, and to accept with resignation and quiet courage all that Thou mayest be pleased to lay upon me.

Behold, my God, here am I; do with me as it pleases Thee. Thou art my Father; I am Thy child; Thou canst preserve my life and gladden me with Thy help. When evening comes, I will praise Thy goodness, and joyfully extol Thy mercy for all that Thou hast done unto me. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Affliction is a stormy deep,
Where wave resounds to wave;
Though o'er my head the billows roll,
I know the Lord can save.

The hand that now withholds my joys
Can re-instate my peace:
And He who bade the tempest roar
Can bid the tempest cease.

In the dark watches of the night
I'll count His mercies o'er;
I'll praise Him for ten thousand past,
And humbly sue for more.

When darkness and when sorrows rose
And pressed on every side,
The Lord has still sustained my steps,
And still has been my Guide.

Here will I rest, and build my hopes,
Nor murmur at His rod;
He's more than all the world to me,
My health, my Life, my God.

—*Nathaniel Cotton, 1791. a.*

EVENING PRAYER OF A SICK PERSON.

Psalm 77: 1-3. I cried unto God with my voice, even unto God with my voice; and He gave ear unto me. In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God and was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.

IN view of the thousand accidents which may happen to us by day and by night, we should never arise in the morning nor retire at night without commending our body and soul to the mighty protection of God. This

is still more true in the case of a sick person. If God has helped him to pass a day of his sickness, he should (1) thank God for His gracious help. If God has blessed the medicine, and made his sufferings endurable, he should heartily thank God for it. At the same time he should pray for forgiveness if he has complained or murmured against God. And when night approaches, a time which sick persons particularly dread, he should (2) again come before God in prayer, and beseech Him graciously to ward off all dangerous accidents and pain.

When he has thus committed himself, body and soul, to God's care, he should not doubt (3) but that the Triune God will be his light and strength by night, keep guard about his bed, care for him, and protect him. He should be confident that God will, for the sake of the blood and death of Jesus, forgive him his sins and be gracious to him. And if during the night the hour of death should come, the Triune God will embrace him with the arms of His mercy, and send His holy angels to lead the departing soul to heaven. With such good thoughts in his mind, the sick person should yield himself completely to the wisdom, love and grace of God.

PRAYER.

O merciful God, I have lived through another day. Lord, Lord, in Thy goodness Thou hast spared my life till this hour. And I give Thee praise and thanks for Thy fatherly faithfulness. Especially do I praise Thy name, because Thou hast helped me to bear my pain and sickness to-day. Blessed be the Lord, who daily beareth our burdens, even the God who is our salvation. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. Though the Lord cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon Thee. Thou deliverest the needy when he crieth, and hidest not Thyself from his supplications.

O mighty God! The day is far spent, the night is at hand. Therefore I turn to Thee in prayer, and say: My father, abide with me, and leave me not this night. Command Thy angel to come and guard me, who am Thine own, against the assaults of Satan. Ward off from me this night all sudden and dangerous attacks, soothe my pain and guard me against fright, anxiety, and misfortune. O heavenly Father, remain with me, Thy sick child; for if Thou, gracious God, art



CHRIST HEALING THE SICK CHILD.

present, I shall not be afraid. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?

O Jesus, the sun is about to set and disappear from sight; but do Thou, the Sun of Righteousness, continue to shine upon me. O my Saviour, fold me this night in Thy arms. Let Thy left hand be my pillow, Thy right hand my covering. Grant that I may sleep in Thee, and, even in sleep, dwell upon Thy blood which was shed for me and Thy wounds which were endured for me. Let me find in them comfort, forgiveness, and strengthening of soul. O blessed Holy Spirit! My fellow-men, with but few exceptions, now leave me; but do Thou, O Comforter of the sorrowing and Helper of the needy, remain with me. Strengthen me and keep me in true faith and Christian patience.

Holy Trinity, take me under Thy guardian care. The Lord bless me and keep me; the Lord make His face shine upon me and be gracious unto me; the Lord lift up His countenance upon me, and give me peace. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O Thou, from whom all goodness flows,
I lift my heart to Thee;
In all my sorrows, conflicts, woes,
Dear Lord, remember me.

When on my aching, burdened heart
My sins lie heavily,
My pardon speak, new peace impart;
In love remember me.

Temptations sore obstruct my way,
And ills I cannot flee;
O give me strength, Lord, as my day;
For good, remember me.

Distrest with pain, disease, and grief,
This feeble body see;
Grant patience, rest, and kind relief;
Hear, and remember me.

When in the solemn hour of death
I wait Thy just decree:
Be this the prayer of my last breath,
Good Lord, remember me.

And when before Thy throne I stand
And lift my soul to Thee,
Then, with the saints at Thy right hand,
Good Lord, remember me.

—*Thomas Haweis, 1792. a.*

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS FOR PATIENCE.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 42: 11. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

FOR ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Thus we are admonished in Hebrews 10: 36. And certainly, whoever would do the will of God, dare not be rebellious and self-willed, but must be patient and resigned.

The sick person should be moved to patience (1) by the example of Christ, who amid the greatest sufferings opened not His mouth, but was led as a lamb to the slaughter. If we would be joint-heirs with Him in glory, we must suffer patiently as He did. The sick person should (2) remember that his sickness has come upon him in accordance with the will of God. Not a sparrow, and not a hair of our head, falleth without His will; how much less can so great a burden and sickness come upon any one without His will. The sick person should be moved to patience (3) by the remembrance of God's love and almighty power. What God lays upon us, He

can also remove; He needs but to speak a word, and the sick are made well.

The sick person should bear in mind, (4) that he has by his sins deserved much greater sufferings than those which he is enduring; and that therefore, instead of becoming impatient, he should humble himself before God in true repentance and faith, and pray for mercy. (5) The sick person should remember that impatience does not make the cross lighter but heavier; that God has promised to help us to bear the cross which He lays upon us; but that He has not promised to help us bear our impatience, because that is not from Him but from ourselves.

PRAYER.

Merciful God, Gracious Father! Behold I poor mortal lie here upon this bed of sickness, and cannot move from it. But I come to Thee, and appear before Thy exalted throne. It has pleased Thee, my Father, to lay this affliction upon me, and to send me sickness instead of the health which I hitherto enjoyed. Now therefore, O God and Father, Thy will be done; but grant me patience, so that I may bear it all without murmuring or rebelling.

Thou hast blessed me with many pleasant days; shall I not also bear evil days when Thou

seest fit to send them? Though Thou hast chastened me sore, Thou wilt not forsake me. Since I have received good at Thy hands, and have often been refreshed and gladdened by Thee in days of health, I will by Thy grace, bear these days of sickness and suffering in patience. In all humility I will call to mind the good and happy days of health which I have enjoyed in my life-time, and compared with which these few hours of suffering are hardly sufficient to be counted.

I know, O God, that Thou art loving and gracious; therefore Thou wilt not lay upon me a greater burden than I can bear. I cling to Thy Word which says: "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." O my God, Thou knowest how much I am able to bear; Thou knowest my weakness: and therefore Thou wilt regulate my sufferings according to my strength. Look upon Thy weak and sick child, and deal with me according to Thy Fatherly love. I do not refuse to suffer; for I know that Thy thoughts toward me are thoughts of good, and that Thou wouldest have my sufferings promote my sanctification.

My God, here am I; do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight. Grant me grace to realize

that it is Thy holy purpose to employ this sickness as a purifying fire, which shall consume and remove from my soul the impurities which still cling to it; as an alarm-bell, which shall awaken me to a consideration of my sins, that I may repent; as a prayer-bell, which shall call on me to seek the forgiveness of all my transgressions for the sake of the blood and death of Jesus; yea, as a voice which calls to me, "Set thy house in order, and think of thy death and the grave; prepare thyself for eternity."

Be it so; and do Thou prepare and fashion me in such a manner as to make me what Thou wouldest have me to be in eternity. For I know that an eternal and transcendent glory shall follow upon the sufferings of this present time. Therefore be calm, my soul! Why art thou cast down, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M. D.

Lord, it belongs not to my care
Whether I die or live:
To love and serve Thee is my share,
And this Thy grace must give.
If life be long, I will be glad
That I may long obey;
If short, yet why should I be sad
To soar to endless day?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before:
He that into God's kingdom comes
Must enter by this door.
Come, Lord, when grace has made me meet
Thy blessed face to see;
For if Thy works on earth be sweet,
What will Thy glory be?

Then shall I end my sad complaints,
And weary sinful days,
And join with the triumphant saints
That sing Jehovah's praise.
My knowledge of that life is small,
The eye of faith is dim;
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all,
And I shall be with Him.

—Richard Baxter, 1681. a.

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS FOR GOD'S HELP.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 54: 4. Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.

IT IS a great comfort to have a good friend in time of suffering or misfortune. While it may happen that a needy person, a stranger, or a poor person lacks an earthly friend and helper to say to him: "How are you"; we Christians know for a certainty that God is the Helper of all the needy.

For God (1) has promised His help and grace to all His children. Therefore a sick person should not despair, even if he sees that all men forsake him, and that none has pity on him; and should firmly believe that God will not forsake him, but will, at the right time, send him help and deliverance. (2) Again, if a sick person has good friends and sufficient means to provide for his wants, and yet nothing seems to help him, he should not on this account lose courage nor doubt the promises of God, but should be confident that God will be near to him with His help in all his sorrowful hours. (3) This help is experienced either through the preservation of the patient's life, or the alleviation

of his pain, or the bestowal of sufficient strength to enable him to endure even the severest sufferings. Yea, God is faithful; He is often near to us when we imagine He is far from us.

PRAYER.

O Faithful God! Thou beholdest my sad and wretched condition. My strength is failing, my flesh is wasting away, and the cross presses ever more heavily upon me. Lord, O Lord, my God, who hearest my supplications and who seest my sufferings! I beseech Thee most fervently, Remain with me and forsake me not. I plead Thy promises in which Thou hast assured me: "Fear not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen Thee: yea, I will help Thee; yea I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." And again: "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee." And now, O my God, I depend upon Thy Word. I need Thy help so badly; I cannot endure my sufferings, if Thou wilt not abide with me and help me to bear them. My sickness will soon overwhelm and destroy me, if Thy hand sustain me not. Remember that I am but dust. O how easily this earthen mold, my body, can be broken; how readily I sink; how speedily my life will pass away and how

soon my end will come, if Thou wilt not, by Thy divine power and Thy Fatherly hand, uphold me, and, according to Thy mercy and gracious promises, support me; Thy help is my greatest comfort; for if Thou, O God, art with me, I am not afraid.

If it be comforting to me to have my friends surround my bed in the day-time or watch over me at night, how much more comforting it is to have Thee, my God, with me! Men may indeed pity me and express their sympathy for me; but if Thou art with me, then I have the best Helper, Deliverer, and Physician by my side. Thy holy presence will quicken and sustain me, assuage my pain, and quiet my anxious heart. Therefore, leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. As a mother will not forsake her child, so Thou, O God, wilt not forsake me. Let me experience Thy gracious presence in the inward joy, the blessed consolation, the sweet thoughts, which Thy presence brings. Comfort me in my sufferings as a mother comforts her child. O my God, confirm my faith, sustain my strength, help me to fight and gain the victory. Thy strength is made perfect in my weakness. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M. D.

Thou art my Hiding-place, O Lord!
On Thee I fix my trust,
Encouraged by Thy holy Word,
A feeble child of dust.
I have no argument beside,
I urge no other plea;
And 'tis enough the Saviour died,
The Saviour died for me.

When storms of fierce temptations beat,
And furious foes assail,
My refuge is the mercy-seat,
My hope within the veil.
From strife of tongues and bitter words
My spirit flies to Thee:
Joy to my heart the thought affords,
My Saviour died for me.

'Mid trials heavy to be borne,
When mortal strength is vain,
A heart with grief and anguish torn,
A body racked with pain:
Ah, what could give the sufferer rest,
Bid every murmur flee,
But this, the witness in my breast
That Jesus died for me.

And when Thy awful voice commands
This body to decay,
And life, in its last lingering sands,
Is ebbing fast away,

Then, though it be in accents weak,
And faint and tremblingly,
O give me strength in death to speak,
“My Saviour died for me.”

—*Thomas Raffles, 1833.*

THE SICK PERSON REALIZES THAT HE IS MORTAL.

MEDITATION.

Job 14: 1, 2. Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

ALTHOUGH all men are mortal, and every day some die and are buried, few reflect upon their mortality as long as they are well and prosperous. Hence God sometimes reminds them of it through sickness. For when the healthy sicken and wither like the rose, and the strong become weak, they begin to realize their mortality.

Sincere Christians should daily call to mind that they are mortal. When they undress at night and put on their night-clothes they should remember that some day others will undress them and clothe them in a shroud. And when God sends illness upon them, they should picture to their minds their approaching end. It

is a delusion of Satan to imagine that, if we do not think of death, we shall not die. For whether we think of it or not, our end will come whenever it pleases God. He who prepares himself for a happy death will die in peace.

A man should also be reminded of his mortality (2) when he thinks of his ancestors who have died. He should bear in mind that his turn will come also. Blessed is he (3) who in view of his mortality apprehends Christ by faith and perseveres in a godly, Christian life, until death. Such an one, when he dies, will not really die, but will enter for Christ's sake upon eternal life.

PRAYER.

My God! It has pleased Thee, in accordance with Thy counsel and purpose, to lay me upon this bed of sickness, and thus, drawing me aside from my occupation and from my sins and evil habits, not only to admonish me truly to repent, but also to remind me of my death, and to impress upon me the fact that I am mortal. Behold, Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.

My God, since sickness is a monitor of death, I realize thoroughly that I am a human being,

and mortal. I am but dust, and to dust I shall return. I look upon my open grave as my mother's lap, in which my body shall calmly rest and sleep. I know that it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; and I have often prayed in my days of health: Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. I know that I must leave everything behind me, my property, my honors, my earthly happiness, and all that I possess in this world. For here I have no continuing city, but I seek one to come.

Dost Thou seek, O Lord, by means of this sickness to remind me of my end as Thou didst Hezekiah, and to say to me as to him: Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live? O then grant me grace gladly to meditate upon my mortality and my approaching end, and to reflect that I shall, perhaps, never rise from this bed, and that I have perhaps spent my last year on earth, and completed the number of my days which Thou hast written in Thy book: in order that I may, by prayer, repentance, and faith, and by an honest examination into my past life, prepare myself for a happy departure from this world. Let me realize, my God, that I shall not die any sooner because I prepare myself for a happy end, but that I shall, by such preparation,

be drawn away from the world and from sin, and be hallowed to Thee; yea, that Thou hast sent this sickness upon me for the very purpose of having me thus prove, examine, and prepare myself, die to the world, and live in Thee. Behold, O God, here am I: call my soul hence whenever it pleases Thee. But first prepare me thoroughly, that, when I die, I may be found in Thy grace, and may depart in peace. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M. 6 lines.

Who knows how near my end may be?

Time speeds away, and death comes on.

How swiftly, ah, how suddenly

May death be here, and life be gone!

My God, for Jesus sake I pray

Thy peace may bless my dying day.

O Father, cover all my sins

With Jesus' merits, who alone

The pardon that I covet wins,

And makes His long-sought Rest my own.

My God, for Jesus' sake I pray

Thy peace may bless my dying day.

Then death may come or tarry yet;

I know in Christ I perish not.

He never will His own forget;

He gives me robes without a spot.

My God, for Jesus' sake I pray

Thy peace may bless my dying day.

And thus I live in God at peace,
 And die without a thought of fear,
 Content to take what God decrees,
 For through His Son my faith is clear;
 His grace shall be in death my Stay,
 And peace shall bless my dying day.

—*Emilia Juliana, Countess of Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, 1688.*
Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1858.

THE SICK PERSON RESIGNS HIMSELF TO LIVE OR DIE.

MEDITATION.

Matt. 26: 39. And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt.

GOD'S will is always the best. We are, indeed, accustomed to speak these words. But when we are to submit to His will completely, and to be satisfied with what is contrary to our own will, we often find that this is by no means easy. But a person whom God has cast upon a bed of sickness should (1) remember that it is God's will that he should be sick. Therefore he should beware of impatience; otherwise it will be evident that he is not satisfied with God's will. (2) He should look at the example of Jesus Christ, who, in the

midst of the greatest sufferings and anguish, and while the sweat, like great drops of blood, trickled from his brow, nevertheless prayed: "Father, not My will but Thine be done." Such submission and resignation to His will is pleasing to God, and is a mark of God's children. To rebel against God's will would not be of any avail in any case. For if God has determined that the sickness shall be mortal, His will will nevertheless be done, and no amount of rebelliousness will prevent death from coming. (4) Therefore it is best for the sick person to say: "Behold, Lord, here am I; do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight. I desire to live longer, if it be Thy will. But I am also ready to die, if Thou wilt have it so."

PRAYER.

O kind and gracious and merciful God! Confined in body to my bed of sickness, I yet come in spirit before Thy holy throne with my sighing and supplication. I see that it is Thy will, O God, that I should lie here sick, and be deprived for a season of the blessed gift of health. But since it is Thy will, it shall be mine also. Thy will and my will shall be one. I was born according to Thy will, and I will die when Thou wilt. I was well a long time according to Thy

will, and now I am willing to be sick according to Thy good pleasure and as long as Thou seest that it will be good and profitable for my soul. Yea, my God; even if it were possible for me to get well in opposition to Thy will, I would not desire to do so; but would rather fulfill Thy gracious purposes upon my sick-bed. Therefore I will now say with Jesus: Father, not my will, but Thine be done. And again, The Lord's will be done. Should I live longer in this world, I will continue to praise Thee, and spend in Thy service and in true piety the years which Thou dost grant me upon earth. But if it be Thy will that I shall not rise again from this bed, but die of this disease, do Thou make me ready for a happy death. I know that some time my earthly house of this tabernacle shall be dissolved; but I also know that I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In heaven is my heritage, my fatherland, my citizenship. Why should I not rejoice to enter upon my inheritance, to hasten to my fatherland, and to enjoy the glory of the children of God. Though I have reason to pray for the prolonging and preservation of my life, it is still a question whether it would not be better for me to depart and to be with Christ, to behold my Saviour, whom I loved even while I did not see Him. Therefore, O God, I leave

it all to Thee; Thou knowest best what is salutary for me. Behold, here am I; the Lord do with me as seemeth good in His sight. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M. D.

We know, by faith we know,
If this vile house of clay,
This tabernacle, sink below .
In ruinous decay:
We have a house above,
Not made with mortal hands;
And firm as our Redeemer's love
That heavenly fabric stands.

It stands securely high,
Indissolubly sure;
Our glorious mansion in the sky
Shall evermore endure.
O may we enter there,
To perfect heaven restored!
O may we be caught up to share
The triumph of our Lord!

O let us put on Thee
In perfect holiness,
And rise prepared Thy face to see,
Thy bright unclouded face!
Thy grace with glory crown,
Who hast the earnest given;
And then triumphantly come down,
And take us up to heaven.

— C. Wesley, 1744. a.

THE SICK PERSON REALIZES THAT THE
CROSS AND AFFLICTION COME
FROM GOD.

MEDITATION.

1 Sam. 2: 6. The Lord killeth, and maketh alive;
He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.

GOD is Love; and He loves men tenderly. Christians experience His love every day in the gracious help and the benefits which they receive at His hands. They behold it also in His great works of love, Creation, Redemption and Sanctification.

Since God is Love, the sick person (1) can say, "My affliction does not come from my enemy who hates me, but from God who loves me. It comes from my Father, who from my youth up has granted me help in manifold perils and emergencies." And when this conviction is established in the soul, it enables the sick person (2) to comfort himself with the thought: "My Father does not mean to do harm to His child; my faithful Friend retains His loving heart, even though He has sent affliction upon me." Therefore the sick person (3) should compose himself in reliance upon God, and pray diligently. He should lay his weary head in God's

arms, look with joy and courage to heaven, and say to himself: "He who has sent me my trouble knows well how to end it." He should especially see to it, that he does not permit himself to be made doubtful of God's love by the severity of his disease or by the greatness of his pain or by the threatening danger. For here also we have the consolation that the Lord "daily beareth our burden, even the God who is our salvation. Unto Jehovah the Lord belong the issues from death." Ps. 68:19, 20 (Rev. Ver.).

PRAYER.

O Lord God, who art full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth; who forgivest iniquity, transgression, and sin, who dost not keep Thine anger forever; and who hast mercy upon the afflicted, and raisest up them that be bowed down! Poor and afflicted I lie here before Thee, and pray: O, look down upon me from Thine exalted throne, and hear me.

Lord, I know and believe that my sufferings come from Thee. Thy hand wounds, but it also heals; it maketh sore, but also bindeth up. And since my sickness cometh from Thee, I will also look up to Thee for help. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help;

my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. From Thee I have received life, health, and prosperity: shall I not also accept this sickness? Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? The trees in the field stand at times in full bloom, adorned with leaves and fruit beneath the warming rays of the sun. But in winter they look dead, suffering from tempest and frost; and all this comes from Thee, O God. Therefore I will also remember that this is my time of suffering and affliction which Thou hast meant for me.

Lord, even as Thou knowest where a star stands, whether high or low in the great heavens, so Thou knowest also my present condition. Thou knowest how heavy is the burden I bear and how long I have been suffering; Thou knowest exactly how much strength I have to endure these things. O dear Father, lay upon me as much as Thou wilt; but give me grace and strength to bear it. I know that without Thy will not a hair can fall from my head, and that still less can I be sick. If not a sparrow falleth, how much less can I be subjected to pain, discomfort and sickness and even die, without Thy will. Since then, my sufferings come from Thee, they come from my Father; since they come from my Father, they come from loving hands and a

loving heart, not for my destruction, but for the welfare of my soul.

Correct me, my Father, but with judgment, lest Thou bring me to nothing. Afflict me, but make me glad again. If Thou hidest Thy face, let it shine upon me once more. Let Thy face shine upon me, and I shall recover. If I have deserved punishment, I will gladly fall into the hands of my Father, for His anger endureth but for a moment, and in His favor is life. He will have mercy upon Zion, and be gracious to His child. Amen.

HYMN.

73.

Sovereign Ruler of the skies,
Ever gracious, ever wise!
All my times are in Thy hand,
All events at Thy command.

Thou didst form me in the womb;
Thou wilt guide me to the tomb:
All my times shall ever be
Ordered by Thy wise decree.

Times of sickness, times of health;
Times of penury and wealth;
Times of trials and of grief;
Times of triumph and relief:

Times the tempter's power to prove,
Times to taste a Saviour's love:

All must come, endure, and end
As shall please my heavenly Friend.

O Thou gracious, wise, and just!
Unto Thee my life I trust;
Know that Thou art God alone;
I and mine are all Thine own.

—*John Ryland, 1777. a.*

THE SICK PERSON RECOGNIZES THE BENEFITS OF SICKNESS.

MEDITATION.

John 11: 4. This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

THE natural man does not want to believe that sickness can ever be a benefit. For he declares: "Not only is the body weakened and exposed to the peril of death, but its powers are diminished, and many discomforts and much expense are incurred through sickness." Yet in spite of all these things, sickness is sometimes profitable even for the body, in that it cleanses the body from impurities, and causes the health to be all the better afterward.

But sickness is in particular profitable for the soul. For (1) God often brings men back from

paths of sin by means of sickness. How many a sinner goes on reckless in his way, pays no heed to God or His Word, and heaps up sin upon sin. Such a person God brings back, so to say, by force through sickness, pain, and suffering, so that he comes to his senses, and escapes from Satan's snares. (2) Sickness is, however, profitable to the godly also; for by its means they acquire a knowledge of God's almighty power, goodness, wisdom, love and mercy, — a knowledge which they did, indeed, possess by faith before, but which they now have thoroughly experienced. (3) After the sickness is past, godly souls evince a greater love to God, greater fervency in prayer, and greater religious sincerity. They have learned to submit themselves to God, to think of death, to prepare for a happy end, to direct their thoughts to heaven, and to commend their souls into God's hands. If a sick person remembers these things, he will be satisfied with God's dealings with him even in sickness.

PRAYER.

O my God and Father! I perceive very plainly what Thy holy purpose is. Thou hast decided that this shall be my time of suffering, in which the sun of happiness shall be hidden behind the clouds, my health be gone, and my bodily

strength diminished for a season. I thank Thee, my God, that, before Thou visitedst me with this sickness, Thou didst let me know Thy ways, and learn that the way of the cross is the way to heaven, and that Thou doest good to our souls even in sickness.

I perceive clearly, O God, that Thou wouldest turn me away from the world. Thou purposest to make the world distasteful and heaven sweet to me, in order that I may deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; and that I may examine my own life, and turn to Thee in true repentance. When we are well and know nothing of trouble, we often act as if we were in the world only for the purpose of gaining earthly wealth, or of sharing in the pleasures, sins and merry-makings of the world, and following its ways and customs. But since such a course would end in our soul's destruction, Thou dost, in Thy faithfulness, occasionally lead us apart, that Thou mayest speak with us alone.

O my God, it seems Thou wouldest now speak with me alone, and warn me to beware of the world's sins, temptations, wickedness, and evil customs. Thou wouldest persuade me not to be conformed any longer to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of my mind, that I may know what is that good and acceptable

and perfect will of God. Therefore, my God, I will now do as Thou wouldest have me do. If Thou wilt permit me to become well again, I will be better, pray more earnestly, avoid what is wrong, lay aside my former evil habits, shun the people and places which have been the occasion of my sin, and become a new creature.

If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. If, therefore, O God, Thou hast seen that I have been lukewarm in my religion and remiss in my prayers, but willing to sin and ready to enjoy the lusts of the world, Thou wouldest, through the sickness, arouse me to the thought of my salvation, and persuade me to arise from the sleep of sin. Thou sayest to me, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and I will purify thee from thy former uncleanness." Thou desirest to remind me of death and of the end of my earthly life, in order that, if I recover, I may have learned to know and praise Thy almighty power, love and goodness in a manner in which I could not have known and praised them, if Thou hadst not visited me with this sickness.

O Lord, do Thou perform the work which Thou hast begun in me, to Thy glory and my soul's salvation. Through this bitter medicine, restore health to my soul. Through these sharp incisions and pains, heal the wounds of sin. With

this caustic, wash off my vices. And grant that, in true repentance and living faith, I may humble myself before Thee, and seek and find help, counsel, comfort, and forgiveness in the wounds of Jesus. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M. D.

I was a wandering sheep,
I did not love the fold;
I did not love my Shepherd's voice
I would not be controlled.
I was a wayward child,
I did not love my home;
I did not love my Father's voice,
I loved afar to roam.

The Shepherd sought His sheep,
The Father sought His child;
They followed me o'er vale and hill,
O'er desert waste and wild;
They found me nigh to death,
Famished, and faint, and lone;
They bound me with the bands of love,
They saved the wandering one.

Jesus my Shepherd is,
'Twas He that loved my soul,
'Twas He that washed me in His blood,
'Twas He that made me whole.
'Twas He that sought the lost,
That found the wandering sheep;
'Twas He that brought me to the fold,
'Tis He that still doth keep.

I was a wandering sheep,
I would not be controlled;
But now I love my Shepherd's voice,
I love, I love the fold!
I was a wayward child,
I once preferred to roam;
But now I love my Father's voice,
I love, I love His home.

—*Horatius Bonar, 1845.*

THE SICK PERSON PLACES HIS TRUST
IN THE ALMIGHTY POWER OF
GOD.

MEDITATION.

Ps. 30:2, 3. O Lord my God, I cried unto Thee, and
Thou hast healed me. O Lord, Thou hast brought up
my soul from the grave: Thou hast kept me alive, that
I should not go down to the pit.

THERE is nothing more pleasant and com-
forting in times of danger than to have
a good friend of whom we can say, I
know that he can and will help me. A sick
person cannot, indeed, say this of any human
being, but he can say it of God. (1) The sick
person can see the omnipotence of God in the
career of other persons. When he hears, or
reads, or learns how God raised the dead to life,
or restored those who were sick unto death, he

can confidently conclude: The almighty God who helped then is living still. (2) The sick person can picture to himself the unlimited power of God, which is greater than that of all the kings of the earth, and of all men, combined. What is impossible with men is possible with God. What is very difficult for us, is very easy for Him.

The sick person should remember (3) that God is not lacking in means to help. At His word the sickness must depart. He can so bless the most insignificant herb or medicine that it removes the source of the disease, and promotes a return to health. (4) When a sick person remembers these things, he should trust in God, persevere in prayer, and await the hour of God's deliverance. (5) He should none the less take the medicine which is prescribed to him by his physician, but should be on his guard against all superstitious ways of trying to effect a cure, and be sure that the Almighty can and certainly will help when His hour has come.

PRAYER.

O my Lord and God! Thou seest how pain and suffering have taken hold upon me, and how every morning I continue to be in misery. My disease does not yield, and I know not but that this shall be my bed of death. I entrust it

all to Thee; I will live or die, as Thou wilt. Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth, and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Long before I was born Thou didst record in Thy book the number of my days. Yet I do not lose courage, but lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. I know that Thou art an almighty God, and that life and death are in Thy hands; that in Thine omnipotence Thou canst wake the dead, restore from the most dangerous sickness, and alleviate and remove the greatest misery and pain. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, the Helper in Israel can deliver out of every trouble; yea, He is able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think and to deliver all who call upon Him.

Therefore, as I lie here upon my bed, I look not around me to weak human beings, nor to myself, for I am sick and wretched, but above me to Thee, my God and Lord. I also say, with the believing centurion, Lord, speak the word only, and Thy servant shall be healed; speak the word only, and I shall live, and be freed from all my sufferings. I know that nothing is impossible with God. Thy power, O Lord, is boundless, and there is no God beside Thee. O God, who didst heal the sick Hezekiah, restore the

diseased woman, cure the man with the palsy, and raise the young man at Nain: look in mercy upon me also. Thou gracious Deliverer of Thy faithful ones! help me, have mercy on me, show me a token for good. Thou art my Helper and Saviour, my God; O, delay not. Nevertheless do all things according to Thy will. I know that in Thine omnipotence Thou canst restore me, and that in Thy goodness Thou wilt do so, if it be salutary for my soul. Amen.

HYMN.

Psalm 90.

C. M.

Our God, our Help in ages past,
Our Hope for years to come;
Our Shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal Home!

Under the shadow of Thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is Thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting Thou art God,
To endless years the same.

Thy Word commands our flesh to dust:
"Return, ye sons of men":
All nations rose from earth at first,
And turn to earth again.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

Like flowery fields the nations stand,
Pleased with the morning light:
The flowers beneath the mower's hand
Lie withering ere 'tis night.

Our God, our Help in ages past,
Our Hope for years to come,
Be Thou our Guard while troubles last,
And our eternal Home.

—Watts, 1719

THE SICK PERSON CALLS TO MIND THE BAPTISMAL COVENANT.

MEDITATION.

1 Peter 3: 21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

IF there be any name which, applied to God, is comforting, it is certainly the name Father; and if there be any blessedness of man which is great, it is certainly the blessedness of being a child of God. As this relation

of sonship is calculated to inspire joy at any time, so it is particularly fitted to comfort us in sickness. This comfort is one to which the sick person should firmly cling. He should remember (1) that God is an almighty Father, with whom nothing is impossible. (2) He should remember that God is a faithful Father, who means well with His children. (3) He should remember that God is a wise Father, who can turn the bitterness of the cross into a healing balm for His children. (4) He should remember that God is a kind and loving Father, who, though He afflicts us, also has mercy upon us. If the sick person calls these things to mind, he will have cause to rejoice.

This blessedness of divine sonship has become the possession of the sick Christian through holy baptism, in which he has made a covenant with the Triune God. But while he should be strengthened and gladdened by the assurance that he is God's child, he should also as a child of God (1) submit himself cheerfully to God's will and Providence, and not murmur against Him, but believe that God will act toward him as a faithful Father. (2) If in the days of his health he has offended God and lived like a worldling, he should now upon his sick-bed fervently beseech God to forgive him, earnestly resolve that he will live differently in the future,

and firmly believe that His blessed heavenly Father will have mercy upon him.

PRAYER.

O Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Behold I, Thy child, find myself in a condition in which human help is vain. I look around me and ask for help, and there is none that responds. But I will not despair; nay, I will come to Thee, my heavenly Father, and bring my complaint to Thee. As the sheep in distress hastens to its shepherd, the child to his father, the subject to his king, so I hasten to Thee, my King, my Father, my Shepherd.

O Triune God, remember that I am Thy child; that I have been baptized; and that in holy baptism I have made a covenant with Thee. In that covenant Thou didst promise to be my Father, to care for me as a Father, to help me, and to deal with me in love. Jesus has washed me with His precious blood, and bestowed upon me the robe of His perfect righteousness. The Holy Ghost has been shed upon me abundantly, and cries in my heart, Abba, Father,—bearing witness with my spirit that I am Thy child. O Triune God, behold I, Thy wretched child, come to Thee. My father and my mother forsake me, my relatives and friends cannot help me; but do Thou, O heavenly Father, take me up.

As the centurion had pity on his servant who lay sick unto death, and spared no pains to help him, so do Thou, O my Father, pity and help me. As the father whose daughter lay at the point of death followed after Jesus and besought Him, "Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come and lay Thy hands upon her and she shall live," so I also follow Thee, my God and Father, and beseech Thee: If it be Thy will, if it be for my good, make me well again, preserve my life. I know that Thou art an almighty Father, a wise Father, a gracious and loving Father; and whither shall a child go in its need but to its father. Lord God, the Father in heaven, have mercy upon me! Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon me! Lord God the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me! Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. O have mercy upon me also.

If I have been a disobedient child, I repent. If I have forsaken Thee, I now return to Thee. As the father received the returning prodigal, so do Thou mercifully receive me, who now come to Thee in repentance and faith, and cry, Have mercy, have mercy, upon me, O God. If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? Trusting in Thee, I wait for Thy help. I have already learned that it is possible to be

a child of Thine and yet to suffer sickness and sorrow, and to bear many crosses; and therefore Satan shall not easily shake me in my confidence that I am Thy child. And yet I beseech Thee, let me behold Thy Fatherly love, and know that Thou hast not forsaken me; let me experience Thy Fatherly hand. Amen.

HYMN.

(Ich bin getauft auf deinen Namen.)

8, 7, 4.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
I'm baptized in Thy dear name;
In the seed Thou dost inherit,
With the people Thou dost claim,
I am reckoned;
And for me the Saviour came.

Thou receivest me, O Father,
As a child and heir of Thine;
Jesus, Thou who diedst, yea, rather
Ever livest, Thou art mine.
Thou, O Spirit,
Art my guide, my light divine.

I have pledged, and would not falter,
Truth, obedience, love to Thee;
I have vows upon Thine altar,
Ever Thine alone to be;
And forever
Sin and all its lusts to flee.

Gracious God, all Thou hast spoken
In this covenant shall take place;
But if I, alas, have broken
These my vows, hide not Thy face;
And from falling
O restore me by Thy grace.

Lord to Thee I now surrender
All I have and all I am;
Make my heart more true and tender,
Glorify in me Thy name.
Let obedience
To Thy will be all my aim.

Help me in this high endeavor,
Father, Son and Holy Ghost!
Bind my heart to Thee forever,
Till I join the heavenly host.
Living, dying,
Let me make in Thee my boast.

—*John Jacob Rambach, 1734.*
Charles W. Schaeffer, Tr. 1860.

THE SICK PERSON TRUSTS IN THE MERCY OF THE TRIUNE GOD.

MEDITATION.

II Tim. 4: 18. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

TRUE Christians cannot want for comfort in affliction and sickness, if they only remember who they are and with whom they have to deal. They are children of God; therefore they should believe that the Triune God will not forget them in their distress and pain. (1) The Creator, who has guided them in their youth, sustained them in later years, and preserved them as a Father, will not forsake them. How should God forsake His creatures and the works of His hands? He may hide Himself from His creatures for a season, but He will not forsake them. (2) Their Redeemer, Jesus Christ, will not forsake them; for He endured suffering and pain and death, and shed His precious blood, for them. How should He leave them without help in their sickness? No; His love is too great for that. (3) Their Sanctifier, the Holy Ghost, will not forsake them, but will comfort, quicken, and cheer them, and bear witness with their spirit that

they are children of God, even though their sickness and pain continue unabated.

If a sick person holds fast this threefold comfort, he will be enabled to bear his ordeal patiently, and firmly to believe that his help is not far from him. But (4) he must pray for the forgiveness of all those things by which he has offended against the Triune God in days of health, and in steadfast faith must patiently wait for His gracious help.

PRAYER.

O Holy Triune God! Although I am weak in body, I will not on that account become weak in my faith and my trust in Thee. For they that trust in the Lord shall be immovable like Mount Zion. I am, indeed, discouraged at times by the lingering and tedious nature of my disease; but I take courage again through Thy Holy Spirit, and especially through the remembrance of the many mercies which Thou hast shown to me in times past.

Canst Thou forsake me, O my Creator, who hast preserved me till this hour? Is the Lord's hand shortened? No; Thy hand, which has led and guided and strengthened and preserved me hitherto, will sustain me also in my sickness. Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love, and with loving kindness hast Thou drawn me

till now. It was Thy love which vouchsafed to me so many years of health. It was Thy love which warded off misfortune, pain, and peril from me in times past. It was Thy love which let so many tokens of Thy grace and mercy fall to my lot up to this very hour. Therefore, now in my illness, I commend myself entirely to Thee.

Canst Thou forsake me, my Saviour, who hast redeemed me by Thy precious blood from sin and death and the devil? As Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption, so wilt Thou also grant me Thy help for my poor diseased body. As Thy love has delivered me from the curse and from death, yea from hell itself, so it can also help me speedily in my sickness. O Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon me in my present sufferings.

Canst Thou forsake me, O my Sanctifier, who hast sanctified body and soul, consecrated them to Thee in holy baptism as Thy temple, and dwelt therein till now? Thou wilt assuredly be my Stay and Comfort in my weakness, and bear witness now also with my spirit that I am a child of God, even though I suffer pain and affliction. Therefore I will be of good courage in my sufferings, and will say to my soul: Thy heavenly Father has clasped Thee in His eternal love; the Son of God has chosen Thee for His own, His

brother, and joint-heir with Him; the Holy Spirit has assured Thee of His sweet consolation and His blessed indwelling: therefore all things are Thine; the grace of God is thine, the merit and righteousness of Christ are thine, the comfort of the Holy Spirit is thine, yea, heaven itself with all its glory is thine. O then, since this is so, I will not worry over the diseased condition of my body, but cast my burden upon the Lord, and trust in the God who has been so merciful to me. O my Father, I trust in Thee. O Jesus I seek refuge in Thee, O Holy Spirit I surrender myself to Thee. Lord God the Father, what Thou hast created, Lord God the Son, what Thou hast redeemed, Lord God the Holy Ghost, what Thou hast sanctified, I commend into Thy hands. To Thy holy name be the glory, honor, and praise now and for evermore. Amen.

HYMN.

Father of heaven! Whose love profound^{L. M.}
A ransom for our souls hath found,
Before Thy throne we sinners bend:
To us Thy pardoning love extend.

Almighty Son! Incarnate Word!
Our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord!
Before Thy throne we sinners bend:
To us Thy saving grace extend.

Eternal Spirit! By whose breath
The soul is raised from sin and death,
Before Thy throne we sinners bend:
To us Thy quickening power extend.

Jehovah, Father, Spirit, Son!
Mysterious Godhead! Three in One!
Before Thy throne we sinners bend:
Grace, pardon, life to us extend.

—*Edward Cooper, 1805.*

THE SICK PERSON WOULD BEAR HIS
SUFFERINGS WITHOUT
MURMURING.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 39: 9. I was dumb, I opened not my mouth;
because Thou didst it.

HOW long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord?
for ever? how long wilt Thou hide Thy
face from me? (Psalm 13:1). Thus
many pious Christians sigh, as they lie upon a
lingering bed of sickness. God's hour often tar-
ries too long for them. If it delays for many
days, weeks, and months, some of them some-
times murmur. But a pious Christian should
never permit himself to do so, but should (1)
remember that God does not forget nor forsake
us in our sufferings, in trouble, in sickness; for

that would be to forget His promises. If He delays, wait for Him; for He delays for the good of our souls. (2) If, because of the delaying of His help, the cross should become heavier, the Christian should not murmur, but remember the omnipotence, love, and mercy of God. As the medicine of the sick person must be carefully measured out, and the bitter drops carefully counted before they are given to him, so we should believe that all our affliction is carefully measured for us; for God is faithful, who will not permit us to be tempted above that we are able. (3) Therefore, if the sufferings be great and numerous and long in duration, we should not on this account lose courage, but, persevering in supplication, prayer, faith, hope, and trust, we should wait for God's hour of help.

PRAYER.

O holy and wise God! I perceive it to be Thy will and counsel that I should remain confined to the house and to my bed for weeks, yea as long a time as it may please Thee. I do not find fault with Thy holy will nor murmur against Thee, but say: Here am I, Lord, do with me as seemeth good to Thee. Should I not drink from the cup which the Father has placed at my lips? My Father will not pour out poison instead of medicine for me. I will

bear the Lord's anger; for I have sinned against Him. These bitter sufferings cannot be other than salutary for my soul, even though flesh and blood revolt from them. Thou hast been my Father and God from my youth up, and Thou wilt continue to be such to me now while I am sick.

My God, if Thou hast decreed that I shall lie here and suffer for a long time, let not the time be too long, but give me occasionally hours of relief in which I shall be free from pain or at least find it alleviated. If I am called upon to suffer much, give me also much strength. Thou knowest how weak I am, and how impossible it is for me to endure much more; therefore do not lay too much upon me, lest I perish. Thou knowest well what I am able to bear, and how frail my life is. The wind passeth over me, and I am gone like a flower. O deal with me as a mother deals with her weak child: help me to bear my burden, carry me in Thine arms, hold me in Thy bosom. Should my sufferings become more intense than they are now, do not forsake me, but help and support me by Thy grace. Should I have more sleepless nights, let me retain the comfort that Thou art still my God, my Father, and my Friend. I know that when Thou sendest affliction upon Thy children, Thou dost so, not in order to destroy them, but

to draw them closer to Thee. Therefore, draw me, my God, through this sickness, away from the evil habits and pleasures of the world to Thee, to holiness, to godliness, to heaven, and to salvation.

Yes, my God, although Thou dost let me suffer, I will not part from Thee. Though Thou, my Shepherd, leadest me upon a path beset with thorns, which wound my body and soul, I willingly follow Thee. If the Head has worn a crown of thorns, the members cannot tread upon roses. I loved Thee when Thou gavest me health and happiness and well-being. Therefore I will also love Thee now in sickness, in sorrow, and in pain. I know that Thou canst and wilt help me. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

Away, my needless fears,
And doubts no longer mine!
A ray of heavenly light appears,
A messenger divine.

Thrice comfortable hope,
That calms my stormy breast;
My Father's hand prepares the cup,
And what He wills is best.

He knows whate'er I want;
He sees my helplessness,

And always readier is to grant
Than I to ask His grace.

My fearful heart He reads,
Secures my soul from harms,
And underneath His mercy spreads
Its everlasting arms.

Here is firm footing; here,
My soul, is solid rock,
To break the waves of grief and fear,
And trouble's rudest shock.

This only can sustain
When earth and heaven remove:
O turn Thee to thy Rest again,
Thy God's eternal Love!

— C. Wesley, 1749.

THE SICK PERSON PREPARES HIMSELF
TO PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S
SUPPER.

MEDITATION.

I Cor. 11: 28. Let a man examine himself, and so
let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

THE Christian should always live in such
a way as to be prepared for a happy
death at any moment. If a healthy per-
son should do this, how much more should a
sick person do so. The patient will do well

therefore, (1) as soon as he is attacked with disease, to think of his sins, and say: "I do remember my faults this day." For since sickness and affliction often come as a punishment for sin, the sick person should concern himself with his reconciliation with God. (2) This reconciliation takes place if the sick person, in repentance and faith, beseeches God for the forgiveness of his sins, and partakes of the Lord's Supper. (3) We should not imagine that we are sure to die, if we partake of the Lord's Supper on our sick-bed; it is not a food unto death, but unto life and salvation.

But it is to be borne in mind, (4) that we are not to wait with our repentance and our partaking of the Lord's Supper till the throes of death have already taken hold upon us, and our understanding and strength are almost completely gone, but should attend to these things in time, while we are still in the possession of our faculties, and are able to seek peace with God. If man thus sincerely turns to God, he shall in Christ and for Christ's sake find life and peace.

PRAYER.

O Lord, Lord God, full of compassion, and gracious, and plenteous in mercy and truth! I poor sinner have resolved to seek reconciliation

with Thee, and to beseech Thee most fervently to forgive me all the sins which I have committed against Thee during my past life. I desire to seek mercy and forgiveness of sins in the wounds of Jesus, and thus to prepare for a happy departure from this world.

It has pleased Thee, O God, to lay me upon this bed of sickness. And since I do not know whether I shall rise from it again in health or die upon it, I would make it my chief concern to care for my soul, and to commend all else to Thee, my gracious and merciful God. I would be reconciled with Thee now, because I am still in the possession of my senses, and can still call to mind when I sinned, how often I sinned, and how heavily I sinned. I beseech Thee for pardon now while I am still able to pray, because I know not but that my sickness may increase in severity, and the loss of my understanding and of the other faculties of my mind may render me unable to pray or to think of Thee. I know that one who prepares himself for death does not on that account die any sooner, or live any longer. But he does what is most profitable for him: if he regains his health, he will shun the sins which he recognized and repented of on his sick-bed; and if he dies, he is prepared, and dies happy.

These are my reflections, O God. Having obtained the forgiveness of my sins, I would partake of the Holy Supper, and then patiently, cheerfully and believingly await Thy further dealings with me. Therefore, in the anxiety of my soul I fall down before Thee, and cry: O, be merciful to Thy child. Remember not the sins of my youth nor my many transgressions. O Lord, for the sake of Jesus, my Saviour, pardon mine iniquity; for it is great. O my God, grant me grace and strength to carry out my holy resolution, to Thy glory and the salvation of my soul. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O Lord, turn not Thy face from me,
Who lie in woeful state,
Lamenting all my sinful life
Before Thy mercy-gate:

A gate which opens wide to those
That do lament their sin:
Shut not that gate against me, Lord;
But let me enter in.

And call me not to strict account
How I have sojourned here;
For then my guilty conscience knows
How vile I shall appear.

So come I to Thy mercy-gate,
Where mercy doth abound,

Imploring pardon for my sin,
To heal my deadly wound.

O Lord, I need not to repeat
The comfort I would have:
Thou knowest, O Lord, before I ask,
The blessing I do crave.

Mercy, good Lord, mercy I ask,
This is the total sum;
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit;
Lord let Thy mercy come.

—*John Mardley, 1562.*

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS TO GOD FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

MEDITATION.

Job 42: 6. I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

IT is a very appropriate and laudable custom of many true Christians, to call themselves to account every evening for the evil which they have thought, said, and done during the day, and to pray God for the forgiveness of their sins; thus being reconciled to God before they retire to rest.

If this should be done daily by every one, how much more should it be done by one who

is sick. (1) His examination should, however, cover not only his doings for a day or a week, but for his whole life. He should inquire how he spent the days of his health; whether he employed them for the glory of God and the good of his fellow-men. He should investigate where, how often, and how greatly he sinned while he was well. And because confinement to bed by sickness places much time at our disposal for this purpose, the investigation should be all the more thorough and earnest.

After the sick person has examined into his past life, (2) he should earnestly pray to God for the forgiveness of all his sins, especially because he does not know how soon he may be summoned before the judgment-seat of God. (3) If the sickness has been the means of revealing our sinfulness to us, we should thank God for the illness by means of which He has opened our eyes, led us to a knowledge of our wretched state, and given us an opportunity to seek His grace. Without the sickness, this might not have taken place. (4) But what we promise while we are sick, we must also perform after we are well, lest our unfaithfulness bring upon us a greater calamity.

PRAYER.

O gracious and loving Father! I have resolved in Thy name to be reconciled with Thee, to pray Thee for mercy and the forgiveness of my sins, and then to receive the Holy Supper here on my sick-bed. I would do this in time, while I am in the possession of all my faculties. I live, but I know not how long. I must die, and I know not when.

Therefore I now come before the throne of Thy grace, and humbly pray Thee for the forgiveness of all the sins which I have committed against Thee in my life-time. My God, I am compelled to acknowledge that I have often offended Thee in times past. Alas, I did not always employ the days of my health to Thy glory, in Thy service, for my growth in grace, or in true godliness. And therefore Thou hast had reason to visit me with sickness, that I might look into my heart and life, and repent of the misuse of my health, and my many sins. Forgive me, O Lord, that I have not loved Thee more fervently nor lived more uprightly than I, alas, have done. O God, remember not the sins of my youth nor my many transgressions. According to Thy mercy remember Thou me, for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

O how I tremble, when I hear that I must appear before Thy judgment-throne, and give an account of every idle word which I have spoken. O, how shall I, with my many sinful thoughts, stand before Thee, who art the Judge even of our thoughts? And if I must give an account of my whole life, and of all my deeds and actions, O Lord, who can stand? Therefore I come before the throne of Thy grace trusting in Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour, and pray: For the sake of His wounds, have mercy upon me; for the sake of His precious blood, forgive me all my sins; for the sake of His agony and bloody sweat, help me, O Lord God.

I am ashamed, O my God, to lift up my eyes to Thee; I am ashamed of my former years and their transgressions. O that I had not done these things! O that I had lived a better Christian life! I promise Thee, O God, that I will begin a new life. If Thou wilt give me back my health, I will spend to Thy glory, in faith and in true piety, all the years which Thou shalt permit me to live henceforth, and regard them as a gift, as an addition to my life. I will look back during all my life to this illness and this distress of soul, and also to Thy mighty hand. O Lord, be merciful to Thy child, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Amen.

HYMN.

Psalm 51.

L. M.

O Thou that hear'st when sinners cry,
Though all my crimes before Thee lie,
Behold them not with angry look,
But blot their memory from Thy book.

Create my nature pure within,
And form my soul averse to sin;
Let Thy good Spirit ne'er depart,
Nor hide Thy presence from my heart.

I cannot live without Thy light,
Cast out and banished from Thy sight;
Thy holy joys, my God, restore,
And guard me that I fall no more.

Though I have grieved Thy Spirit, Lord,
His help and comfort still afford;
And let me now come near Thy throne
To plead the merits of Thy Son.

A broken heart, my God, my King,
Is all the sacrifice I bring;
Look down, O Lord, with pitying eye,
And save the soul condemned to die.

O may Thy love inspire my tongue!
Salvation shall be all my song;
And all my powers shall join to bless
The Lord, my Strength and Righteousness.

— *Watts, 1719, a.*

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS BEFORE
PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S
SUPPER.

MEDITATION.

John 6: 54, 55. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.

EVERY Christian should be anxious to receive the Lord's Supper devoutly and worthily. And a sick person can do this, if he examines himself beforehand. For (1) he is free from those things which sometimes disturb his devotion during the public service of the congregation. And, if God keeps him free from pain and discomfort, he can continue his devotion indefinitely. (2) He should not hesitate to receive the Holy Supper in his own home, because Jesus has promised to be with the believers everywhere and always with his grace. (3) The sick person should also remember, that it may be the last time that he receives the Lord's Supper, and should therefore resolve all the more firmly to abide in faith and holiness.

Since holy men have wished that their last word may be "Jesus," their last food the Holy Supper, and their last thought that of the crucified Jesus, the sick person (4) should rejoice

that one of these wishes is about to be realized for him, and should believe that God will grant him grace for the realization of the other two also. (5) If, however, we should desire to receive the Lord's Supper on our sick-bed with the idea, that it will make us physically well, this would be very wrong, and be acting superstitiously.

PRAYER.

Dearest Jesus! I desire to receive the Holy Supper here upon my sick-bed, because I know not when I shall depart from this world. And because I do not want to appear without Thee before the judgment-bar of God, I desire once more to commune with Thee while I live, that Thou mayest be and abide in me, and I in Thee. I would now receive the Holy Supper here in my home, and I am confident that Thou wilt here delight and quicken me with Thy grace.

O dearest Friend of the soul, who art nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and savest such as be of a contrite spirit! Gladden my heart, and strengthen my soul through this heavenly food and drink. I have, indeed, received it, when I was well, together with the congregation. But, alas, I did not always receive it with such devotion and earnestness as I should, because the throng of people, my own vanity, and my roving eyes prevented me from

doing so. But now no one can disturb me, because I shall commune with Thee in my solitude. O dearest Jesus, since I now purpose to keep this heavenly feast of joy on earth in holy devotion, and there are no other hindrances to a devotional spirit, do Thou also relieve my pain and sickness, and strengthen me during this hour, in order that I may carry out my purpose unhindered and undisturbed.

I now show forth Thy death, and remember Thy sufferings and crucifixion, Thy wounds and pain, Thy agony and torturing pangs, Thy expiring groan, and all that Thou hast done for me. I remember these things, and I give Thee heartfelt thanks for them. Yea, I thank Thee now with all my heart, O Jesus, for Thy wounds and pain and cruel death, and will be thankful to Thee forever.

I remember also the institution of the Holy Supper, in which Thou dost give me food and drink unto eternal life. I accept Thy words as the words of an all-knowing, almighty, and faithful God. I believe that in the Lord's Supper I receive Thy true body and Thy true blood. When I receive the bread that has been blessed, I receive in an invisible manner Thy true body, O Jesus; and when I receive the cup that has been blessed, I receive in an invisible manner Thy true blood. This heavenly food and heavenly

drink shall strengthen me in believing that I am reconciled to God. This heavenly food and drink shall give me the comforting assurance, that I am not lost but have eternal life. This heavenly food and drink shall assure me that I stand in Thy grace, that I have the forgiveness of sins, and that I am united with Thee, who art the propitiation for our sins and the sins of the whole world.

This heavenly food and drink shall remind me of the feast of joy in heaven,— of the eternal bliss and glory which Thou shalt grant me after death. O Jesus, Thou Bridegroom of my soul, sanctify and cleanse me, that my soul may be betrothed and married to Thee forever. O Shepherd of my soul, lead Thy sheep in green pastures, feed me with the bread of life, strengthen me with Thy precious blood. Then Satan shall not be able to harm me, nor my sins accuse and condemn me. Here is the perfect ransom for my sins, the ransom which Thou didst pay for me on the cross, and by which I am justified and saved. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Bread of heaven, on Thee we feed,
For Thy flesh is meat indeed:
Ever may our souls be fed
With this true and living Bread.

Wine of heaven, Thy blood supplies
This blest cup of sacrifice;
Lord, Thy wounds our healing give;
To Thy cross we look and live.

Day by day with strength supplied,
Through the life of Him who died,
Lord of Life, O let us be
Rooted, grafted, built on Thee.

—*Joseph Conder, 1824. a.*

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS AFTER PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

MEDITATION.

Gal. 2: 20. I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

EVERY Christian has reason to thank God fervently whenever he receives the Lord's Supper. But a sick person has still more reason to thank God most heartily when he has been permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper in the possession of his faculties. It should not be imagined, however, (1) that the Lord's Supper effects an improvement in the physical health. It effects, if it be worthily received, an improvement in the condition of the soul; for the communicant obtains the forgive-

ness of sins and peace with God, and is more closely united with Christ. But the Lord's Supper was not instituted for the purpose of causing any change in bodily sickness, nor is there any promise that it will do so. Therefore (2) the sick person should not receive it for the purpose of seeing whether he is to live or die, — for this is an abuse of the sacrament, — but should use it for the strengthening of his faith, and for the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, of the grace of God, and of the salvation of his soul.

When he has thus received it for the purpose for which Christ instituted it, (3) he should praise God for it, and with calm and believing heart commit himself into God's hands. In case of war, we are satisfied if we have secured the safety of what is most valuable. Our soul is our most valuable possession; and if, by true repentance and union with Christ, we have committed our soul to God's keeping, we may rest assured that God will deal kindly with the body also.

PRAYER.

My Jesus, I have fervently desired to receive the Holy Supper before I die. This desire has now been granted. Thou hast given me Thy body to eat and Thy blood to drink; and for This I thank Thee from my inmost soul. I lie here

upon my bed, from which Thou canst enable me to rise, but on which I may also die, if it be Thy will. Therefore I have prepared myself. My soul is now recovered, since I am united with Christ. And I will gladly die, now that I have entered into closest communion with Thee, O Jesus. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation. O Jesus, live in me. Grant me a tranquil mind, Christian contentment, and a soul completely resigned to Thee. Let my thoughts dwell always upon good and holy things, and my heart abide in the sweet remembrance of Thee.

If Thou dost will, O God, that I shall depart from this life, Thy will be done. I know that my sins are forgiven. Therefore I need not fear to appear before Thee; for where there is forgiveness of sins, there life and salvation are also. I know that Jesus has bestowed His righteousness upon me; and if I come before Thee, O God, clothed with this glorious robe, Thou wilt for its sake pronounce me free from guilt. I have now become justified by faith, and I have peace with God through my Lord Jesus Christ. He has opened heaven for me, and given me access to the throne of grace. I know that Jesus

is my Intercessor, and that I die in the grace of God and at peace with Him. I am assured of the sustaining grace of the Holy Spirit. And thus I am saved; I die saved; my departure from the world is blessed, and I shall enter upon eternal life.

Thou hast been very merciful to my soul, O God, in permitting me to keep this heavenly feast of love with Jesus in the full possession of my senses. Let this heavenly food strengthen and preserve me in true faith unto everlasting life. Thus is my wish fulfilled, that the Holy Supper might be my food before I die. Grant that the last Word which I may speak on earth may be the name of Jesus, and the last thoughts that I think thoughts of Jesus' blood and death and pain and sufferings and holy merit. Then I know that I shall live and die cheerful and happy. If God be for us, who can be against us? Yea, who will separate us from the love of Christ? I will cling to Him till He brings me to the assembly of the saints and the elect in heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

7, 6. D.

O living Bread from heaven,
How hast Thou fed Thy guest!
The gifts Thou now hast given
Have filled my heart with rest.

O wondrous Food of blessing!
O cup that heals our woes!
My heart, this gift possessing,
In thankful song o'erflows.

My Lord, Thou here hast led me
Within Thy holiest place,
And there Thyself hast fed me
With treasures of Thy grace:
And Thou hast freely given
What earth could never buy,
The Bread of Life from heaven,
That now I shall not die!

Thou givest all I wanted,
The Food can death destroy;
And Thou hast freely granted
The cup of endless joy.
Ah, Lord, I do not merit
The favor Thou hast shown,
And all my soul and spirit
Bow down before Thy throne!

Lord, grant me that, thus strengthened
With heavenly food, while here
My course on earth is lengthened,
I serve with holy fear:
And when Thou callest my spirit,
To leave this world below,
I enter, through Thy merit,
Where joys unmingled flow.

—*John Rist, 1651.*

From Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1858.

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS WHEN HE TAKES HIS MEDICINE.

MEDITATION.

James 5: 14, 15. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

A DEVOUT prayer is always necessary, even in days of health; why then should a person who is sick and using medicine forget to pray? As regards the medicine and its use, (1) the sick person should not despise the physician and his prescriptions. He is not to think: "If I am to get well, God can cure me without medicine; and if I am to die, medicine will not help me." No; we should not think thus; for to do so, is to tempt God. He has not promised to help us without the use of means. And what God has not promised, we cannot expect from Him. Those who despise the medicine and die are the murderers of their own body. At the same time, however, (2) we are not to put all our confidence in the physician and the medicine, but in God. Among the sins of King Asa, this was reckoned as one, that

in his disease "he sought not to the Lord but to the physicians." (2 Chron. 16:12.) (3) The patient should choose the medium between the two extremes: he should pray with his lips and heart, and with firm confidence in God's help he should use the medicine. Then he knows that the medicine will be blessed for him.

PRAYER.

Great God! Thou seest my condition; for nothing is hidden from Thine all-seeing eye. The darkest places are light to Thee. Thou seest my sick bed, and knowest how I feel. O my God, I will use the prescribed medicine in Thy name: but my only hope is in Thee; for Thou art the Lord, our Physician. Nevertheless since Thou lettest the herbs grow out of the earth, and hast Thyself created the means which are used as medicine to restore men to health, I will now, with a heart-felt calling upon Thy name and with prayer, use the medicine. Do Thou Thyself add Thy blessing to it. I know, indeed, that Thou canst help and heal without medicine; for Thou needest but to speak the word, and the sick become well; Thou needest only to nod, and disease flees. But since Thou hast commanded us to use means, I will obey, and employ them; and I pray Thee, O mighty God, to bless the medicine which I now take in Thy name and in

firm reliance on Thee. Let it be the means of restoring me to health, of soothing my pain, and of strengthening me in my weakness. If Thou addest Thy blessing, the most insignificant herb may help me. I do not take the medicine for the purpose of compelling my health to return, but as a means which Thou hast permitted me to use for regaining my health from Thy gracious hand. I lift up my eyes to heaven when I take the medicine into my hand. I pray to Thee before I take it, while I take it, and after I take it. If Thou wilt now let it benefit me, I shall be restored; for my days are in Thy hands. Without Thy blessing nothing can succeed. Therefore I cry to Thee for Thy blessing. What Thou blessest is blessed forever. If Thou wilt let this medicine be the means of curing me, I will, indeed, give Thee thanks for it; but I will also remember that not the medicine in itself, but Thy grace has preserved me, and Thy hand has healed me; and, with Hezekiah of old, I will spread abroad Thy praise among all men. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M. D.

Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into His hands,
To His sure truth and tender care,
Who earth and heaven commands:

Who points the clouds their course,
Whom winds and seas obey,
He shall direct Thy wandering feet,
He shall prepare thy way.

Thou on the Lord rely,
So safe shalt thou go on;
Fix on His work thy steadfast eye,
So shall thy work be done.
No profit canst thou gain
By self-consuming care;
To Him commend Thy cause; His ear
Attends the softest prayer.

Thy everlasting Truth,
Father, Thy ceaseless Love,
Sees all Thy children's wants, and knows
What best for each will prove.
And whatso'er Thou wilt
Thou dost, O King of kings!
What Thy unerring Wisdom chose,
Thy Power to being brings.

Thou everywhere hast sway,
And all things serve Thy might;
Thy every act pure blessing is,
Thy path unsullied light.
When Thou arisest, Lord,
What shall Thy work withstand?
When all Thy children want Thou giv'st,
Who, who shall stay Thy hand.

—*Paul Gerhardt, 1656.*
John Wesley, Tr. 1739.

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS FOR THE
ALLEVIATION OF HIS PAIN.

MEDITATION.

Job 16: 6. Though I speak, my grief is not assuaged: and though I forbear, what am I eased?

THE bodily ailments which God permits to come upon men are not all alike. Upon some God sends sickness in which not a limb of their body, not even a finger pains them. Others, on the contrary, are visited with the greatest pains. This should teach us (1) that if we would pray, learn to know God, and be reconciled with Him, we ought not to wait till we are sick. Do not delay your repentance till you are ill. For if there be very severe pain, how can you pray, or think of God, or be reconciled with Him? The greatness of the pain makes it impossible to do so.

If a sick person is attacked with great pain, (2) he should not on that account murmur against God, but bear it meekly and patiently. (3) He dare, however, pray for the alleviation of his pain, even as Christ did in His sufferings. Children tell their troubles to their parents, and why should not a child of God bring his troubles before His heavenly Father?

While he is suffering great pain, (4) the sick

person should think of the great sins which he has committed during his life-time, and should acknowledge that his sufferings are well-deserved. But he should also think of God's great mercy and power, and remember that God can deliver him. (5) If he is unable to pray much or for any great length of time, he should sigh to God, and remember that such heart-felt sighs do not go unheard. (6) Impatience does not relieve the pain, but only makes it worse.

PRAYER.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, give ear to my supplications, my King and my God! for unto Thee will I pray. O Lord, I pray and beseech Thee to look upon me in mercy in my bodily weakness, and to relieve my great pain and suffering.

Thou hast promised, that Thou wilt not let us be tempted above that we are able, but wilt with the temptation also make a way of escape that we may be able to bear it. Behold, my God, the burden is too heavy for me, the pains overwhelm me, my body is weak, my strength is gone, my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, my bones are consumed like a brand, mine eyes fail while I wait for my God. O how long shall my soul be troubled, how long shall I long after God? Delay not, O God: Thou

knowest what great sufferings I endure. Thou knowest that the days and nights of my pain have been many; Thou hast heard how I have sighed, and moaned, and complained, and cried unto Thee. Whither shall I go in my distress and pain? Whither can I go, but to Thee alone, my Lord and my God? If I told my troubles to all men, they would doubtless pity me, but they could not deliver me. Therefore I come to Thee. I know Thou canst help me. It lies with Thee. Speak but the word, and I shall live.

O dearest Jesus, who commandedst the raging sea to be calm, command my pain to cease. Thou who by a word didst heal the man sick of the palsy, magnify Thy mercy in me. Make me glad according to the days in which Thou hast afflicted me, and in which I have seen evil. O, come to my rescue before my pain becomes unendurable. And if it be Thy will that I shall continue to suffer, sustain me by Thy grace, that in faith and patience I may wait for Thy help. O lay Thy gracious hand upon me, and I shall be restored and freed from pain.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; for I know that with Him is plenteous redemption. Help me, Thou

God of my Salvation, for Thy name's sake; deliver me; forgive me all my sins for Thy goodness sake, O Lord. Yet not my will, but Thine be done. If I am to suffer longer, be it so according to Thy will. But O grant me strength to endure my sufferings. O my God, give me occasionally a day, or at least an hour, of respite from pain, that I may be refreshed and strengthened. Our affliction is light and but for a moment; therefore, relieve my pain, and at last free me from it entirely. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

"My times are in Thy hand!"

My God, I wish them there;
My life, my friends, my soul, I leave
Entirely to Thy care.

"My times are in Thy hand,"

Whatever they may be;
Pleasing or painful, dark or bright,
As best may seem to Thee.

"My times are in Thy hand;"

Why should I doubt or fear?
My Father's hand will never cause
His child a needless tear.

"My times are in Thy hand,"

Jesus, the Crucified!
The hand my cruel sins had pierced
Is now my guard and guide.

— *W. F. Lloyd, 1835.*

THE SICK PERSON PRAYS GOD NOT TO FORSAKE HIM.

MEDITATION.

Isa. 49: 14-16. Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.

AS poor persons rejoice to possess a rich benefactor, and forsaken ones, to find powerful assistance; so the sick person may be cheerful and happy in his affliction, because he has the promise that God will not forsake him. He should (1) remember that to delay sending help is not the same as to forsake. Many sick persons, if God does not help them at once in the way they desire, at once cry out and say that God has forsaken them. But we ought not to think thus. Help which God has delayed He has not on that account withheld. If He does not help whenever we think He ought, He nevertheless helps when it is necessary. (2) The sick person should remember that God has appointed an hour in which He will help. He should, therefore, patiently wait till that hour comes.

He should (3) inquire whether in his days of health he did not forsake God. And if he did,

can he wonder that God should chastise him for so doing? God desires to remind him of his folly now by delaying the promised help. (4) Therefore the sick person should remain steadfast, and confidently say: "God cannot forsake me: I am his child. God does not wish to forsake me: He has promised not to do so. God will not forsake me: He has often helped me in days gone by." If he thus trusts in God, he will take the delay of God's help patiently, and behold at last the glorious proof that God has not forsaken him.

PRAYER.

O dearest God and Father, who hast loved me with an everlasting love, and drawn me with loving kindness! Behold I am sick, and come to Thee, humbly praying that Thou wouldest not forsake me in my bodily weakness. Thou knowest, O God, that without Thee there is no help for me. Thou art the mighty God of Jacob, the Defender of Israel, the Refuge of the afflicted, the Helper of the needy, our Stay in trouble. The Lord is on my side: I will not fear. He will arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favor me, yea the set time, is come. Men say, We cannot help you; and thus I am forsaken by all men. Yet I know that I am not forsaken by Thee. For thou, O Lord,

forsakest none who trust in Thee. And though we do not understand Thy ways, we need not fear. In Thine own time Thou wilt deliver us.

O God, forsake me not. Behold, how long I have suffered. In the evening I think, I will be better to-morrow; at noon I long for the evening; and in the night I cry, Watchman, what of the night? My soul waiteth for Thee more than they that watch for the morning. O my God, forsake me not. Behold how my sufferings constantly increase. O let not the burden overwhelm me utterly. Take away the heavy stone which rests upon me, the rod which smites me, the pains which torment me. Thou knowest how weak I am. Thou knowest how much I am able to endure. My God, forsake me not. Behold how manifold are my sufferings. It seems that my troubles increase instead of diminishing. Whither can I go, if Thou forsakest me? If Thou wilt not help me, no one can. If Thou forsakest me, I am left without help.

But I know that Thou wilt not forsake me. I plead Thy promise: "I will not leave Thee nor forsake thee." They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever. The Strength of Israel has promised to give strength unto His people, and to deliver the needy when he crieth,

the poor also, and him that hath no helper. I trust in Thy Word, and believe that Thou in heaven wilt keep Thy promise. Thou canst not forsake me; for I am Thy child. I am Thine own, purchased with Thy precious blood, and therefore Thou wilt and canst not forsake me. I am confident that Thou wilt not forsake me; for Thou didst never yet forsake me in trouble and affliction, though sufferings without number came upon me, and the waves of trouble struck together above my head; and Thou wilt not forsake me now. With this hope I rest content. I trust in Thee, and am of good courage, and say, Lord, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me and help me in such a manner as may be pleasing to Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

God of my life, to Thee I call!
Afflicted at Thy feet I fall;
When the great water-floods prevail,
Leave not my trembling heart to fail.

Friend of the friendless and the faint!
Where should I lodge my deep complaint?
Where but with Thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor?

Did ever mourner plead with Thee,
And Thou refuse that mourner's plea?

Does not the word still fixed remain,
That none shall seek Thy face in vain?
That were a grief I could not bear,
Didst Thou not hear and answer prayer;
But a prayer-hearing, answering God
Supports me under every load.
Fair is the lot that's cast for me;
I have an Advocate with Thee;
They whom the world caresses most
Have no such privilege to boast.
Poor though I be, despised, forgot,
Yet God, my God, forgets me not;
And he is safe and must succeed,
For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

— *William Cowper, 1779.*

THE SICK MAN MEDITATES UPON HIS DEATH.

MEDITATION.

II Tim. 4: 6-8. The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing.

TO meditate upon death is (1) profitable; for in so doing we turn the heart away from vanity and sin, and view all earthly things as temporal, transitory, and unable to comfort us in the hour of death. To medi-

tate upon death is also (2) necessary, because those who think that death is still far off from them often become bold, wanton, vicious, enamored of the world, and conformed to it. And if death comes upon such persons unawares, they are certainly lost. To meditate upon death is (3) salutary, because he who prepares for death does not really die when he dies, and death has lost its terrors for him; because the death of believers is nothing but their going to the Father, a sweet slumber. And who fears to go to his Father or to go to sleep in his bed?

But (4) we should not think it a sign that a sick man will surely die, if he speaks much of death, makes arrangements for his funeral, makes his will, and prepares himself for a happy end. No one will die one moment earlier than God has determined that he shall. (5) We should not picture the hour of death to ourselves as something so fell and terrible, as many sick persons do. The heathen indeed have said, that death is the most terrible of all terrible things. But Christians die in the grace of God, in the arms of Jesus, in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. What is there dreadful in this? Is not this rather comfort, sweetness, and joy?

PRAYER.

It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life. Thus I sigh unto Thee, my God, as I perceive from my great and ever increasing weakness, that the end of my life is at hand. I desire to depart and be with Christ. I do not fear death; I have thought of it often while I was well, and now it does not seem so dreadful to me. As the dove returned to Noah's ark with joy, and a stranger gladly hastens to his fatherland; even so I regard my death as a passing away from unrest to rest, and a safe arrival, after earth's pilgrimage, in the heavenly land of joy, in which all the longings of my heart shall be satisfied.

I know that for the believer death is a gentle sleep, an entrance into eternal life. Wicked men and worldlings may well fear death; for they have no gracious God, they are not in the fellowship of Jesus, and have not given their heart to be a dwelling-place of God the Holy Ghost. But I am not afraid to die, because I am assured of Thy grace. The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? God is my Father, Jesus my Intercessor, the Holy Spirit my Guide and Comforter; and I am going to Him, I shall come

into His presence; why should I be afraid? The Bridegroom of my soul will welcome His bride kindly.

When Jesus spoke of his approaching death, He said, I go to the Father. Yes, dearest Jesus, I also will say: When I die, I shall go to the Father, to heaven, to bliss, to eternal life. Why should I be afraid to die? Jesus is mine, His righteousness is mine, His merit is mine, His heaven is mine; why should I not be glad? The body returns to the earth as it was; but the spirit to God who gave it. It passes from earth to heaven, from vanity to salvation, from sorrow to joy, from suffering to bliss. Is not this a blessed transition? I go to rest, to joy, to gladness, to light, to pleasures eternal. Behold, Thy angels surround my bed to accompany my soul to glory above. Behold, Jesus stands with outstretched arms to receive me, His child. And thousands upon thousands of believers stand ready to welcome me.

Therefore I am content. I forget those things which are behind, — the earth and all earthly things which I here possess; and I reach forth unto those things that are before, — the heavenly treasures which are laid up for me above. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of

righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will grant to me at that day, and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing. How well it will be with me, when this earthly house of mine is dissolved! How blessed I shall be, when I am in the arms of Jesus! How happy I shall be, when I shall have passed through death unto life eternal. Amen.

HYMN.

11s.

I would not live alway; I ask not to stay
Where storm after storm rises dark o'er the
way;

The few lurid mornings that dawn on us here
Are enough for life's woes, full enough for its
cheer.

I would not live alway, thus fettered by sin,
Temptation without, and corruption within;
E'en the rapture of pardon is mingled with
fears,
And the cup of thanksgiving with penitent
tears.

I would not live alway; no, welcome the tomb;
Since Jesus has lain there, I dread not its
gloom.

There sweet be my rest till He bid me arise
To hail Him in triumph descending the skies.

Who, who would live alway, away from His
God?

Away from yon heaven, that blissful abode,
Where the rivers of pleasure flow o'er the
 bright plains,
And the noontide of glory eternally reigns.

Where the saints of all ages in harmony meet,
Their Saviour and brethren transported to
 greet;
While the songs of salvation unceasingly roll,
And the smile of the Lord is the feast of the
 soul?

— *William Augustus Muhlenberg, 1826.*

Thou liv'st and lovest without end,
And dost perform Thy word:
My parting soul I now commend
 To Thee, my God and Lord.

— *Philip Frederick Hiller, 1765.*
Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1855.

THE SICK PERSON MEDITATES UPON
THE GRAVE AND THE
RESURRECTION.

MEDITATION.

John 11: 25. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

HE who views the grave as a Christian will not be terrified by it, however gloomy it may appear. For (1) it is a place of rest from all pain, misery, woe, and grief. And while the body of the godly lies thus freed from pain, and sleeping, (2) the soul enjoys heavenly and eternal joy. For the souls of the righteous are in God's hand. No sorrow can touch them. Comfort, joy, and gladness shall be theirs forever. (3) Nor shall the body remain in the grave; but after its weary members have rested a season, it shall rise again on the last day in glory, shine like the sun, and be re-united with the soul.

If it should be objected (4), that we must leave our dear ones and our earthly possessions behind us, we should remember that in heaven there will be a general re-union. If our dear ones remain in the faith and fear God, they shall follow us. And then we shall never be

parted from them again. As regards our earthly possessions, God will give us in their stead heavenly and eternal possessions. If the sick person reflects upon all these things, the thought of the grave will lose its terrors.

PRAYER.

Gracious and merciful God! I am prepared to live or die according to Thy holy will. I am not afraid of death, because I know death will bring me rest after all my troubles and sufferings. For when I depart from this world, I shall take leave of all pain, sorrow, crosses, and turmoil. I shall enter upon rest and joy; I shall be delighted, refreshed, and gladdened, after all the weary days and sorrowful nights which I have spent on earth. I do not fear the grave; for it is my chamber of rest. My distresses, my sickness, my sufferings shall not enter the grave with me. They shall remain behind. O quiet retreat, O pleasant resting-place! When shall my weary limbs and frail body be laid within thee?

Jesus Himself has hallowed the grave, and made it a resting-place. When He was laid in the grave after His crucifixion, all His pain and sorrow ceased. In like manner the Lord has prepared a resting-place in the earth for my body, and a haven of rest in heaven for my soul.

Though men seek for beautiful houses, and soft beds to rest upon, these are not to be compared with my grave. From a beautiful house one may be driven out by fire, or foes, or other calamities. But in my grave no one shall disturb me. Jesus will guard my bones, that none of them be lost; yea, He will bring them together again after they are decayed. In the softest bed many a one is full of pain and discomfort; but in my grave no misfortune shall come near me, no pain shall touch me. For the grave is a bed that is free from all suffering and pain.

Why then should I fear the grave? I shall not remain in it always. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will call me forth from the tomb. Jesus says, "He that believeth in me hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." Consequently my stay in the grave shall be short. My body shall sleep only till Jesus comes and says, "Arise, ye dead, and appear at the judgment." The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear His voice and shall come forth. When I hear that voice, I also shall rise from my grave. My body, made immortal and glorified, shall be re-united with my soul; and I shall shine like the sun, having all my imperfections taken away.

As the grain of wheat shoots forth from the earth a green blade, after it appears to have died, so shall my bones be gathered together, and be covered with sinews and flesh. My body is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body, endowed with celestial attributes. Here it has been a sick and afflicted earthly body; but there it shall be a strong and glorious heavenly body. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

And must this body die,
This mortal frame decay?
And must these active limbs of mine
Lie moldering in the clay?

God my Redeemer lives,
And often from the skies
Looks down and watches all my dust,
Till He shall bid it rise.

Arrayed in glorious grace
Shall these vile bodies shine,
And every shape and every face
Look heavenly and divine.

These lively hopes we owe
To Jesus' dying love:
We would adore His grace below,
And sing His power above,

Dear Lord, accept the praise
Of these our humble songs,
Till tunes of nobler sound we raise
With our immortal tongues.

— *Watts, 1709.*

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD FOR HIS RESTORATION TO HEALTH.

MEDITATION.

John 5: 14. Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

THAT most sick persons are glad to pray is well known. And that most of them make many promises to God, vowing that, if God lets them become well again, they will be new creatures, pious Christians, earnest in prayer, regular in attending divine services, and become new in life and heart and conduct, is well known also. But that only a small proportion of them keep their promises is a fact that is, alas, taught by daily experience. After they have regained their health, the majority of them remain as vain, vicious, unruly, misbehaved, and defiant as they were before, if they do not become even worse.

Therefore a true Christian whom God has restored to health should (1) acknowledge, praise

and magnify God's almighty power, which cast him upon the bed of sickness, but which also raised him again from it, and graciously delivered him from the perils of death. (2) He should keep the vows which he made upon his sick-bed, remembering that they have been made to God. For it is better not to promise, than not to keep what we promise. (3) If, like Hezekiah, the Christian has received new strength, he should not only kneel down and give thanks to his almighty Helper and Deliverer at home, but should hasten to the house of God, and there cast himself down before God's face, and give others an opportunity to learn of the grace which God has manifested toward him. (4) He should also remember the anguish of his soul, diligently reflect upon the peril of death in which he stood, lead a holy and godly life to the glory of the almighty Triune God, and so continue in faith and godly living, that, no matter when God may be pleased to call him away, he may henceforth always be prepared for a happy death and a blissful entrance upon eternal life.

PRAYER.

O almighty and gracious God! I come into Thy holy presence, and thank Thee from my inmost soul, that Thou hast restored me from

my illness. The anxious hours, the intense sufferings, the wretched nights, the great danger in which I lay,—all these things are still fresh in my memory. But behold, Thy mighty hand has raised me from my bed. Thou hast placed me upon my feet again, and enabled me to go out and in. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing: Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.

Lord, Lord, Thou hast done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Hitherto Thy love and mercy have helped me: and now I know full well, that he who serves Thee will be comforted after trial, be delivered out of trouble, and find grace after chastening. For Thou, O Lord, takest no pleasure in our destruction. Thou turnest the storm into sunshine, and our tears into smiles. I have experienced this mercy and faithfulness of Thine during my sickness; and I will remember it through all my life. I will recall the anxiety which oppressed my soul; but I will also, O almighty God, make known before the congregation what Thou hast done for me. Thou hast blessed my medicine, soothed my pain, given me strength to overcome my affliction, and granted me days of refreshing after the tedious and wretched nights. Thou hast pitied me even as a father pitieth his children. Therefore, bless the Lord, O my soul;

and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul; and forget not all His benefits. I will bless the Lord at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, all ye who, like me, have been in trouble, sickness, and pain; and let us exalt His name together. For when we poor ones cried, the Lord heard us, and saved us out of all our troubles. They who look unto the Lord in their affliction, and pray to Him, their faces are not ashamed: He does not let them go away sorrowful from His throne, but has compassion upon them.

O my God, let me ever bear in mind the grace and mercy which Thou hast shown me. Now I know from experience, that Thou art a mighty God; that Thou canst make the dead alive, the sick well, the weak strong, and the sorrowful glad. I was nigh unto death, but Thy goodness preserved my life. Therefore, O God, I have resolved that I will, by thy grace, employ to Thy glory the health which Thou hast restored, and spend in true godliness the life which Thou hast given me anew, and the years which, according to Thy will, I am yet to enjoy in this world. I have learned in my pain and illness, that silver and gold, and the honor and glory

of the world, and good friends, cannot take the burden of my cross from me; and that if Thou hadst not helped me, I should have perished in my distress. Henceforth I will therefore no longer seek after vain things, but find my delight in Thee. I will avoid the sinful society of the world. I will compass Thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Thy wondrous works. Since Thou hast shown me this mercy, I will deny all ungodliness and wicked works, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, that, when the hour of my death which Thou hast appointed comes, I may be ready, like the wise virgins, to enter in at the marriage of the Lamb, and share eternal joy and glory. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Thy ceaseless, unexhausted love,
Unmerited and free,
Delights our evil to remove,
And help our misery.

Thou waitest to be gracious still;
Thou dost with sinners bear:
That saved, we may Thy goodness feel,
And all Thy grace declare.

Thy goodness and Thy truth to me,
To every soul, abound;

A vast unfathomable sea,
Where all our thoughts are drowned.

Its streams the whole creation reach,
So plenteous is the store;
Enough for all, enough for each,
Enough for evermore.

Faithful, O Lord, Thy mercies are,
A rock that cannot move;
A thousand promises declare
Thy constancy of love.

Throughout the universe it reigns,
Unalterably sure;
And while the truth of God remains,
His goodness must endure.

— *C. Wesley, 1762.*

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES AND SHORT
PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO
WERE SICK AND HAVE
BEEN RESTORED TO
HEALTH.

Ps. 30: 2. O Lord, my God, I cried unto Thee, and
Thou hast healed me.*

BLESSED be the Lord, who hath shown to
me His marvelous loving-kindness.
Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will
render praises unto Thee. For Thou hast de-
livered my soul from death. Thou hast deliv-

ered my soul from falling, that I may walk in the land of the living.

My God, my King, Thy various praise
Shall fill the remnant of my days:
Thy grace employ my humble tongue,
Till death and glory raise the song.

The wings of every hour shall bear
Some thankful tribute to Thine ear;
And every setting sun shall see
New works of duty done for Thee.

Gen. 32:10. I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which Thou hast showed unto Thy servant.

Yes, my God! It is Thy mercy and love alone which have moved Thee to deliver me from my pain and distress. I am altogether unworthy of such benefits. Thy faithfulness has been gloriously manifested in me. Thou hast shown tender compassion toward me, and hast dealt with me according to Thy promise. Let me never forget Thy faithfulness. Let it incite me to show love and faithfulness toward Thee all the days of my life: that, as Thy servant, I may serve Thee according to Thy good pleasure, and may at last, as a good and faithful servant, hear the blessed words: "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

All praise and thanks to God
The Father now be given,
The Son, and Him who reigns
With them in highest heaven;
The One eternal God
Whom heaven and earth adore;
For thus it was, is now,
And shall be evermore.

Job 33: 28, 29. He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living.

O Lord Jesus, Thou hast shown Thyself to be my true Redeemer and Saviour, not only in preserving my soul, but also in guarding my body when there was but a step, yea, a hairs-breadth, between me and death. O deliver me henceforth also from all spiritual and bodily harm. Save me from the hand of mine enemies. Save me especially from the dominion of sin. Grant me grace to be light in the Lord and to walk as a child of light. Let me serve Thee without fear in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. Grant me grace to persevere in faith, and to preserve a good conscience to the end. And let me spend the remaining

days of my earthly life, not in the lusts of men,
but according to Thy will, that I may remain
Thine forever.

O Jesus, come and rule my heart
And make me wholly Thine,
That I may never more depart,
Nor grieve Thy love divine.

John 11: 4. The sickness is not unto death, but
for the glory of God.

These words of Thine, my Saviour, spoken
of Thy sick friend Lazarus, have been verified
in me also. The sickness through which I
passed was not unto death; for Thou hast gra-
ciously restored me to health. To Thee alone
belongs the glory. Let my restoration redound
to Thy praise alone. Give me a new heart and
mind. Let me proclaim abroad everywhere
what great things Thou hast done unto me.
Grant me grace to live for Thy glory only, and
with body and soul to praise Thee without
ceasing.

Long as I live, I'll bless Thy name,
God of eternal love!
My work and joy shall be the same,
In the bright world above.

John 5: 14. Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

This warning, O Lord Jesus, let me ever keep in mind. Thou hast taken away from me a well-deserved punishment for my sins, and delivered me from my sickness. It will be easy for Thee to visit me with a more severe affliction, if I do not amend my ways. A worse calamity may very readily befall me, if I yield to sin again, and transgress Thy commands. Graciously preserve me from so doing. Guard me, that I may no more wilfully sin against Thee, but may walk before Thee and be perfect. O unite my heart to fear Thy name.

Order my footsteps by Thy word,
And make my heart sincere;
Let sin have no dominion, Lord,
But keep my conscience clear.

III John 2. I wish above all that thou mayest prosper and be in good health, even as thy soul prospereth.

My God, I have experienced during my illness, that money and property and earthly prosperity are vain, and of no avail to help; and that we cannot by any efforts of our own regain the precious gift of health. I thank Thee for this salutary lesson. Grant me grace to heed

it. Guard me, that I may not become enamored of earthly things, nor think of them more highly than I ought to think. Enable me to value my health as a precious treasure, to keep it with all diligence, and to avoid everything which would tend to ruin it.

God of my life, whose gracious power
Through various deaths my soul hath led:
Or turned aside the fatal hour,
Or lifted up my shaking head:

In all my ways Thy hand I own,
Thy ruling Providence I see:
O help me still my course to run,
And still direct my paths to Thee.

Psalm 119: 106. I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep Thy righteous judgments.

Often while I was sick I resolved to better my life; and often, O God, I vowed to Thee that I would do so. And now I renew my vow. Remind me of it often, and let me never forget to pay my vow to Thee. Grant me to this end the power of Thy Holy Spirit. Make of me through Him a new creature, who shall henceforth walk in Thy ways and keep Thy commandments. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me in

all my ways. Let me live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world to the end; so that I may experience in my own case, that godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.

Baptized into Thy name,
Mysterious One in Three,
My soul and body claim,
A sacrifice to Thee;
And let me live my faith to prove,
The faith which works by humble love.

O that my life may shine,
And all my life express
The character divine,
The real holiness;
And then receive me to adore
The Triune God for evermore.

Psalm 37: 37. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

Gracious Father in heaven, let these words of Thine ever ring in my ears and resound in my heart. Give me grace to follow them faithfully. Make me upright. Teach me to live according to Thy will; and let Thy Spirit lead me in the land of uprightness. Grant me ever-

increasing strength to follow after holiness, to do Thy will. Enable me to grow more and more in faith, in love, and in godliness; and let my end be peace.

Holy Ghost, with light divine
Shine upon this heart of mine!
Chase the shades of night away,
Turn the darkness into day.

See, to Thee I yield my heart;
Shed Thy life through every part.
A pure temple I would be,
Wholly dedicate to Thee.

Job 5: 17-19. Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

How faithful is Thy Word, O God! I have fared exactly as it is written there. Thou didst make me sore, and bind me up; Thou didst wound me, and make me whole. Thou hast delivered me out of many and various troubles. Blessed be Thy holy name! Perhaps some new trouble awaits me; Thou alone knowest. But if it should come, grant that I may be ready and prepared for it, and may trust in Thy

Word. Let me remember then how often Thou hast gloriously helped me; and let me, in child-like trust and hope, look upward to Thee, and wait for Thy help. Let me then also, even while Thou chastenest, taste and see that Thou, Lord, art good, and that all things shall work together for good to them that love Thee.

What if the springs of life were broke,
And flesh and heart should faint?
God is my soul's eternal Rock,
The strength of every saint.

Thy counsels, Lord, shall guide my feet
Through this dark wilderness;
Thy hand conduct me near Thy seat,
To dwell before Thy face.

Rom. 6: 11. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

My God, Thou hast prolonged my days and given me a new lease of life. To Thee alone therefore my years belong. Impel me constantly to consecrate them to Thee. Let me daily die unto sin and live unto righteousness. Let me live to Thy glory, and regulate my conduct according to Thy will. Let me always find favor in Thy sight through Jesus Christ

my Lord. Renew me more and more by Thy grace, and make me to be a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto Thee. Keep me in Thy fellowship to the end, and let no one pluck me out of Thy hand.

Come, gracious Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With light and comfort from above.
Be Thou my Guardian, Thou my Guide;
O'er every step and thought preside.

Conduct me safe, conduct me far
From every sin and hurtful snare;
Lead me to God, my final Rest,
In His enjoyment to be blest.

BOOK IV.

FOR THE USE OF THE DYING AND THOSE WHO SURROUND THEM.

THE DYING PERSON PLACES HIMSELF BEFORE GOD'S JUDGMENT.

MEDITATION.

II Cor. 5: 10. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

ST. PAUL says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" (I Cor. 11: 31).

And certainly, if a man examines his own life, accuses himself, and prays for mercy for Christ's sake, God will not judge and condemn him, but be merciful to him. For whoever confesses his sins and forsakes them, obtains mercy.

This is what a dying person should do. He should remember (1) that he must appear before the judgment-seat of God; for it is appointed unto men once to die; but after this, the judgment. This judgment takes place immediately after death: the soul must at once appear before God. If, while he was in this world, man has

lived in faith and holiness, he shall not come into judgment. His sins having been forgiven on earth for Christ's sake, they are no longer remembered in heaven, but remain forgiven. The wicked man, however, will be judged, because he has died without being reconciled to God. Therefore the dying person will do well (2) to become reconciled to God in good time, to beseech God for forgiveness for Christ's sake, and thus obtain favor. Then whether he dies suddenly or gradually, according as God has decreed, he is assured that God will receive his soul in mercy, and that on the last day he will, as one who is justified for Christ's sake, enter upon eternal joy.

PRAYER.

I know, O my God, that it is appointed unto men once to die; but after this the judgment. Therefore I place myself before Thy judgment now while I am still alive, and desire to be reconciled with Thee before I die. O righteous God, because I do not know how long it will be till I shall depart from this world, I come before Thy judgment and accuse myself.

O Lord, I acknowledge that I am a great sinner. I have transgressed all Thy holy commandments, and have often done so knowingly. I have not loved Thee with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength. I have

not always followed in the footsteps of Jesus, nor let myself be always led by the Holy Spirit as I ought to have done. I have, indeed, become Thy child in Holy Baptism, but I have not always lived as Thy child. In coming to Confession, and in partaking of the Lord's Supper, I have promised much; but I have kept little, and have been conformed again to the world. Lord, I have not done right, and my sins oppress me. I have not walked in the way which Thou hast shown me. Mine iniquities are gone over my head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

O gracious God, who hast promised that Thou wouldest not have the death of the sinner, but that he turn from his way and live; behold I come now, while I am still in the possession of my faculties and able to think, and desire to make my peace with Thee. O, I repent of my sins; I fall down before Thy judgment-seat, and say, Lord God, the Father in heaven, have mercy upon me; Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon me; Lord God the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me. I seek refuge, O Father, in Thine infinite mercy. I have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called Thy child; but I beseech Thee, be merciful to me and disown me not on account of my sins.

O Jesus, I flee to Thee, my Intercessor; I beseech Thee, pray for me poor sinner now in the hour of my death. For if any man sin, we have an advocate with God, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world. For the sake of Thy precious blood forgive me all my sins, and for Thy holy wounds' sake let me find grace before the bar of justice. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. O Blessed Holy Spirit, I flee to Thee: create in me a new heart; cleanse and sanctify it; and bear witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God and am regarded with favor. Work in me true repentance, living faith, and the holy purpose to live only for Thy glory and to die in child-like obedience. Work in me holy thoughts, devout supplications, and sweet meditations on death. Grant me refreshing thoughts of heaven and the future glory. Speak to my heart the comforting words: "My son, be of good cheer: thy sins be forgiven thee." Then I shall not be afraid to die, because I know that the sins which are forgiven here are forgiven in heaven also. O Holy Trinity, be gracious unto me; when I leave this world let me find favor with Thee; do not

impute my sins unto me, but have mercy upon me according to Thy loving-kindness. Amen.

HYMN.

(Herr, Ich habe missgehandelt.)

8, 7, 8, 8.

Lord, to Thee I make confession,
I have sinned and gone astray,
I have multiplied transgression,
Chosen for myself my way.
Forced at last to see my errors,
Lord, I tremble at Thy terrors.

Yet, though conscience' voice appal me,
Father, I will seek Thy face;
Though Thy child I dare not call me,
Yet receive me to Thy grace;
Do not for my sins forsake me,
Let not yet Thy wrath o'ertake me.

For Thy Son hath suffered for me,
And the blood He shed for sin,
That can heal me and restore me,
Quench this burning fire within;
'Tis alone His cross can vanquish
These dark fears, and soothe this anguish.

Then on Him I cast my burden,
Sink it in the depths below!
Let me feel Thy gracious pardon,
Wash me, make me white as snow.
Let Thy Spirit leave me never,
Make me only Thine forever.

— *John Frank, 1649.*

Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1862.

THE DYING PERSON FORGIVES AND ASKS FORGIVENESS.

MEDITATION.

Matt. 6: 14, 15. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

IN order to be prepared for a happy death, it is necessary to be reconciled with our fellow-men. The dying person should not postpone this reconciliation, but attend to it in time, while his mind is still clear. (1) He should remember that, though other persons may have done him much wrong, he is not to carry with him to the grave any ill feeling toward those who are his enemies or who have wronged him, but is to forgive them from the heart, and if possible, make known to them, either by some favor or through good friends, that he has forgiven them.

If he has grieved or offended others, (2) he should not rest until he has effected a reconciliation with them. Nor should he be ashamed to ask them to come before his death-bed, and there sincerely to ask their forgiveness. If they cannot be present, he should apologize to them by letter; or if they are dead, he should ask God for pardon for the wrong he has done. It is

necessary also to return to the proper owner anything which has been stolen or obtained by fraud, and to restore to the owner or his heirs any property which has been unjustly obtained; for the sin cannot be forgiven as long as no restitution of things dishonestly acquired is made.

The dying person should be moved (3) to seek such a reconciliation by a sense of his Christian duty, as well as by the divine command and threat in Matt. 6:15, remembering, that if he is not willing to forgive others, he cannot obtain the forgiveness of God. As you treat your enemies, so God will treat you.

PRAYER.

My God, I live, but I know not how long; I must die, but I know not when. I desire, therefore, to be reconciled with my neighbor in good time, in order that I may leave the world at peace with all men. Heaven is called the home of peace. Irreconcilable, revengeful souls, and souls filled with anger and hatred, shall not be admitted into it, but excluded. Consequently I would free my heart from all anger and enmity, and willingly forgive and ask forgiveness, in order that God may for Christ's sake receive me into favor as one who is reconcilable to his fellowmen.

I am still on the way to eternity; therefore I will lay aside all malice, confident that as I forgive from the heart, so Thou wilt also forgive me. Therefore I herewith forgive from my heart all my enemies and all those who have at any time offended me by words or deeds. I pardon and forgive them, not only with my mouth, but also with my heart, and before God. I will no more think of their offense; I will forget it. And as a proof of my forgiveness, I wish them every good, and will do good to them whenever and wherever I can. Yea, I pray God to bless them, and to let it be well with them and their children in time and eternity.

And as I now forgive and have forgiven all those who have ever angered, offended, harmed, or grieved me; so I also herewith ask forgiveness of all those whom I have ever offended by word or deed, or whom I have injured or grieved. O forgive me, my dear friends, for the love of Jesus; bear no malice toward me. I acknowledge that I have wronged you, and herewith sincerely ask your forgiveness; and if God should permit me to see you all here before my death-bed, I would ask your forgiveness in person.

O merciful God, graciously forgive me all the sins which I have ever committed out of malice or weakness, intentionally or unintentionally,

against my neighbor. I now banish all enmity from my heart. I will not seek revenge; I will no longer think of my injuries. O remember not my sins and iniquities. O heavenly Father, have mercy upon me. O my Jesus, wash me clean from all my sins, and intercede for me. O Holy Spirit, sanctify my heart, and cleanse it from all imperfections. Thus I die happy and blessed. Amen.

HYMN.

P. M.

Jesus, in Thy dying woes,
Even while Thy life-blood flows,
Craving pardon for Thy foes:—
Hear us, holy Jesus!

Saviour, for our pardon sue,
When our sins Thy pangs renew,
For we know not what we do.
Hear us, holy Jesus!

Oh, may we who mercy need,
Be like Thee in heart and deed,
When with wrong our spirits bleed!
Hear us, holy Jesus!

— T. B. Pollock.

THE DYING PERSON BIDS FAREWELL
TO HIS DEAR ONES, AND GIVES
THEM HIS BLESSING.

MEDITATION.

Acts 20: 32. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

THAT persons who are about to die bid farewell to their dear ones and friends, and, if they have any children, give their blessing to these, is a well-known incident in Scripture, and is illustrated in the case of Moses, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus Christ, and others. Such a blessing (1) is not vain; for, since it is a farewell prayer which the dying person makes for his dear ones, it will not go unheard, if it springs from faith and is made in Christ's name. (2) The last words of a dying person generally make a profound impression upon those who are left behind; and the admonition of a dying father or mother or friend is not soon forgotten, but remains in the mind as a spur to right conduct.

As it is laudable for a dying person to take leave of the world with prayer, blessing, and good wishes, so he should (3) be careful not to wish evil to any one; for this would be a form of revenge, and be unbecoming to a Christian.

(4) Children should be admonished not to bring grief and heart-ache upon their parents in days of health, lest they make it impossible for their parents to leave them their blessing. The curse of parents often turns the fortune of wicked children into misfortune. But pious Christians will give even their bad children a blessing rather than a curse.

PRAYER.

O eternal, gracious, and mighty God! I know not how near the end of my life may be, nor how soon Thou wilt exercise Thy authority and call me out of the world. Therefore I would prepare myself for death in good time, and turn to Thee with prayer and singing, finding in this occupation a means to delight and strengthen me in my weakness. For to pray and sing in distress restores to the heart new courage, and gives a foretaste of eternal life.

I would now prepare myself for the future world, and attend to all those things which yet need my attention in this present life. I therefore bid farewell to all my relatives, acquaintances, benefactors, and friends. I commend them, O mighty God, to Thy protection, love, and grace. Do good to them in return for the love and kindness which they have shown me. And since I cannot recompense them, do Thou richly recompense them in my stead. I leave my

friends, relatives, and acquaintances; but do not Thou, O great God, leave them. Keep them in Thy fear, in faith, and in holiness, that we may see one another again in heaven. I go the way of all the earth, and go before them. But in heaven those who believe and are children of God shall meet again.

O faithful God, pour Thy abundant blessing upon those whom I leave behind me, and whom my departure will grieve and pain. The Lord bless you, my dear ones, in body and soul. The Lord be henceforth your Father, Provider, and Guardian, who shall take you under His care, provide for your necessities, and preserve you from all evil. Fear God and do right; put your trust in Him, and know that He will have mercy upon you and be gracious to you. Turn not away from Him by unbelief, wickedness, or unchristian conduct, but be faithful to Him until death, and He will give you the crown of life. Forsake not God, and He will not forsake you. Honor, serve, love, and obey Him. Yes; the God of all grace and mercy bless your going out and your coming in, that you may be and remain the blessed of the Lord. O great God, I have blessed them; let them be blessed.

I now lay me in Thy arms, O Triune God: take my soul, and receive it into everlasting bliss.

I desire to depart and be with Christ. Lord
Jesus, I live unto Thee, I die unto Thee; Thine
I am in life and in death. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M.

Ye servants of the Lord,
Each in His office wait
Observant of His heavenly word,
And watchful at His gate.

Let all your lamps be bright,
And trim the golden flame;
Gird up your loins, as in His sight,
For awful is His name.

Watch! 'tis your Lord's command;
And while we speak, He's near.
Mark the first signal of His hand,
And ready all appear.

O happy servant he,
In such a posture found!
He shall His Lord with rapture see,
And be with honor crowned.

—Doddridge, 1755.

THE DYING PERSON COMMENDS HIM-
SELF TO GOD.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 31: 5. Into Thy hand I commit my spirit:
Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

Luke 23: 46. Father, into Thy hands I commend
my spirit.

DYING persons often have many things to order and arrange before their death. They want to put their house in order, and in their anxiety to do this they sometimes forget the most important thing of all, the care of their soul. But to act thus is foolish and wrong. (1) Every upright Christian should daily commit his body and soul to God's keeping, at evening when he retires to rest, and in the morning when he arises from sleep. This is right and proper, because he does not know what God will command concerning him during the night or the day. But if good Christians do this every day, (2) those who are about to die should certainly do it also. They have before them the example of their Saviour. When He was about to die, He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Thus Stephen also, when he was stoned, said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Such a commending of our soul to God is pleasing to Him, because it is an evidence of our faith

and confidence in God. (3) It is also necessary to do this, because so many changes may take place in the condition of the dying person. And how well it is then, if, while he was yet in the possession of his senses, he committed his soul to God, and thus provided for the security of what is most valuable, leaving it to God's will whether he should live or die. If this has been done, we die in peace.

PRAYER.

Gracious and loving Father, who turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men; who takest Thy dear ones to Thyself through death, and makest them partakers of the glory which Jesus has acquired by His bitter sufferings and death! I am aware that my weakness is a voice loudly admonishing me: "Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live: prepare to meet the Bridegroom; keep Thy lamp of faith burning." And since I do not know when my hour shall come, I would now, while there is yet time, commend myself to Thee, and commit my soul with all its powers to Thy keeping. Free my heart from all worldly things, drive out from it all worldly, sinful, and evil thoughts, that I may delight in Thee alone, rejoice in Thee, speak of Thee, picture to myself Thy glory, and contemplate unceasingly the

heavenly joy which awaits me. Fill my heart with Thy Holy Spirit, that He may create good impulses within me. Help me to remember Jesus Christ, and to keep His atoning death ever before my eyes.

When the hour of death is at hand, preserve me, if it be Thy will, from temptations, despondency, extreme pain, and unbecoming actions. Let me remain conscious to my end, till my breath is gone from me, that my heart and mouth and spirit may sing and speak and pray. And if I should lose my speech, grant that I may taste Thy sweetness in my heart, and feel Thy presence there. Grant me grace to die happy and joyful. Give me a glimpse of the blessedness above, and let me, in the hour of death, have a foretaste of the sweetness of heaven, that I may depart in joy and peace.

As my spirit leaves my body, I commend it to Thee; O take it into Thy hands. Father, into Thy hands I commend my soul. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. Clothe it with Thy perfect righteousness, and lead it into the joys of heaven like a bride to the wedding festivities, like a child to its inheritance, till on the last day it shall be re-united with the body. Yea, I commend to Thee my body also, which shall lie in the cool earth; grant it a soft repose till the last trumpet shall sound and give forth the call;

“Arise, ye dead, and appear before the judgment.” And then let me for Christ’s sake arise joyful to life eternal. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M. 6 lines.

When the last agony draws nigh,
My spirit sinks in bitter fear:
Courage! I conquer though I die;
For Christ with death once wrestled here.
Thy strife, O Christ, with death’s dark power
Upholds me in this fearful hour.

In faith I hide myself in Thee;
I shall not perish in the strife;
I share Thy war, Thy victory,
And death is swallowed up of Life.
Thy strife, O Christ, with death of yore
Hath conquered, and I fear no more.

—*John Andrew Gramlich, 1727.*
Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1855.

THE DYING PERSON MEDITATES UPON
HEAVEN.

MEDITATION.

Acts 7: 55. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

THERE can be nothing sweeter and more delightful to a believer than to think of God and heaven. In heaven is his home, his fatherland, his consolation, his inheritance, his crown, his glory, his heart's desire, his joy. His body is on earth, but his soul is in God; his labor is on earth, but his thoughts are in heaven.

If this should be the case with every believer, how much more should it be the case with one who is about to die. Many sad things are connected with death: the gathering darkness, the farewell from the dear ones, the tears of the on-lookers, the last agony, and the like. But all this sorrow may be sweetened, if the dying one will but direct his thoughts to that heaven which forms the object of his desires. (1) With the gathering gloom of earth he should contrast the glory of heaven, where all shall be light. (2) If the parting gives pain, he should think of the cherubim and seraphim, the holy angels and the elect in heaven, in whose company he shall spend eternity. (3) If he sees his dear ones weep, he

should think of the everlasting joy, gladness, and bliss which await him in heaven, where there shall be no more sighs and groans and tears. (4) The approach of death should not terrify him, because he dies in the arms of Jesus and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. For him who thus lets his thoughts dwell on heaven, and who pictures to his mind the crown, the white robe, and the glory of heaven, the death-bed becomes a veritable Paradise.

PRAYER.

O gracious God, how great is Thy love and mercy toward us! Not only dost Thou do good to us, and help us, and hear us, and have mercy upon us, and overwhelm us with benefits while we live; but Thou keepest in store for us many and glorious gifts in heaven. And O how great and magnificent are those heavenly gifts! By faith I see Thy majesty and glory, and the splendor in which Thou dwellest; and behold the seraphim and all the angels, and the elect — composed of all the believing who have ever lived on earth — standing around Thy throne, lauding and praising Thee, and saying, “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Sabaoth.” By faith I see myself standing in their midst after I have calmly and peacefully departed from this world. I shall wear a glorious crown upon my head, be clothed with white robes, and shine like the sun,

O the glory, the happiness, the bliss which the Father of all mercy and grace shall bestow upon me for Christ's sake! And because death will open to me the door to this glory, I am not terrified by it. If an earthly king can adorn his palace so beautifully that we are filled with wonder and admiration when we behold it, how great and glorious must be the splendor of the heavenly King, and the magnificence of the infinite God! Therefore I will gladly die and take leave of earth. I look with joy to heaven; for my home is there. Here I have no continuing city. Yonder, Jesus has acquired a home for me by His sufferings and death; and by faith I shall go to my Saviour.

When I think of heaven, I remember that it is my fatherland, where all pious Christians, all believers are assembled. As long as I am on earth, I am a pilgrim and a stranger, always journeying on; but when I shall have passed through a happy death to heaven, I shall have rest, and peace, and eternal happiness. I look up joyfully to heaven, and exclaim: There is my inheritance! If my inheritance here upon earth has been great, there is one still greater laid up for me in heaven,—an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Heaven is the paradise in which God will delight the believers; and compared with it the

paradise which was once upon earth was but a shadow. O God, when I am permitted to behold Thy glory in heaven, I shall exclaim to Thee in the words once spoken by the Queen of Sheba to Solomon: O my God, O my Jesus, the half of Thy glory was not told me in my earthly life; Thy glory and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Amen.

HYMN.

7, 6. D.

Jerusalem, the golden,
With milk and honey blest!
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest:
I know not, O I know not,
What social joys are there!
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare!

And when I fain would sing them
My spirit fails and faints,
And vainly would it image
Th' assembly of the saints.
They stand, those halls of Zion,
Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel
And all the martyr throng:

There is the throne of David;
And there from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast;

And they who, with their leader,
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of light.

—*Bernard de Morlaix, about 1150.*
John Mason Neale, Tr. 1851.

THE DYING PERSON MEDITATES UPON THE PROMISES OF GOD.

MEDITATION.

Matt. 25: 34. Come, ye blessed of my Father; inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

THE dying need comfort and refreshing in soul, as well as in body. But what can refresh the soul? Not silver and gold, not honor and earthly splendor; but the Word of God, of which the prophet says, “Thy Word is the rejoicing of my heart.” For this reason we should, in days of health, gather for ourselves a treasure of comforting Scripture verses, and impress them on our heart, in order that, in the hour of death, we may have an ample supply of them. Especially should a dying person (1) call to mind, or have others repeat to him, the divine promises which we find in the Holy Scriptures concerning God’s help, assistance, presence, and grace. (2) He should appropriate

and apply to himself such comforting passages and promises, as if God spoke them directly to him, and gave the promises to him personally. For in the Holy Scripture God speaks to all, and to each one in particular. When the patient has these promises before him, (2) he should depend upon them, and not doubt but that God will fulfil them in him. If God does not do this in a moment, or in an hour, but delays the fulfilment, He will nevertheless gloriously fulfil them in His own time.

PRAYER.

O gracious God, how sweet are the promises which Thou hast given to me in Thy Word! Thou sayest: "I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him;" and again: "Fear Thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed for I am Thy God." Jesus says: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be. In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Yea, I am assured by Thy Word that Jesus prays for me, and is my Intercessor; and that the Holy Spirit maketh intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered.

O gracious God, fulfil now in me all these promises. My need becomes greater and greater; I beseech Thee, be and remain with me in my

last agony. O forsake me not now; stand by me, O Jesus, and let me attain to the glory and inhabit the place which Thou hast prepared for me. O Jesus, be now my Intercessor. Plead for me poor sinner, that I may obtain grace and mercy. O blessed Holy Spirit, stand by me in my weakness, and give me grace and strength. If a hard conflict awaits me, help me to overcome and gain the victory. If I have a high mountain to climb, give me the needful strength. If a painful hour awaits me, help me through it. When my mouth can no longer pray, do Thou make intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered, and bring my weak sighs before God.

And now, O gracious God, I cling to Thy promises, and believe that Thou wilt fulfil them in me, poor wretched one. I believe Thy Word, I trust in Thy Word, I plead Thy Word. When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. O, Thy Word has always been to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart. I entreat Thee, let it now in the hour of my death comfort and refresh me. If the time comes when for peace I have great bitterness, do Thou in love to my soul deliver it from the pit of corruption. Quicken me when the sweat of death bedews my brow, cheer me when my lips turn pale, comfort me when sight

and hearing fail. O Triune God, make me in that hour to hear joy and gladness; grant me a voice of jubilation and rejoicing in my heart, as a herald and foretaste of the heavenly glory. Amen.

HYMN.

8, 7. D.

Hear what God the Lord hath spoken:

O my people, faint and few,
Comfortless, afflicted, broken,
Fair abodes I build for you.
Thorns of heartfelt tribulation
Shall no more perplex your ways:
You shall name your walls salvation,
And your gates shall all be praise.

There, like streams that feed the garden,
Pleasures without end shall flow;
For the Lord, your faith rewarding,
All His bounty shall bestow.
Still, in undisturbed possession,
Peace and righteousness shall reign:
Never shall you feel oppression,
Hear the voice of war again.

Ye no more your suns descending,
Waning moons no more shall see;
But, your griefs for ever ending,
Find eternal noon in Me.
God shall rise, and shining o'er you
Change to day the gloom of night:
He, the Lord, shall be your Glory,
God your everlasting Light.

— *William Cowper, 1779.*

THE DYING PERSON MEDITATES UPON
THE JOY AND FELLOWSHIP OF
HEAVEN.

MEDITATION.

Rev. 7: 9. After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

WHAT sweeter and pleasanter vision could the dying person summon before his mind, than that of the joys and fellowship of heaven? The thought of these has often delighted the godly upon earth. For the dying person should (1) regard all that he possesses on earth as something which he must soon take leave of and never see again. On the other hand (2) he should meditate upon heaven, and frequently think of its joys; and reflect that, after his departure from this world, he shall be transported to the delights and splendors of heaven, where all is light, peace, joy, gladness, and glory, and where, instead of suffering and pain, he shall have everlasting delights. He should also (3) meditate upon the heavenly fellowship, — how he shall soon look upon the countenance of the Triune God, and join the

company of the angels and the elect. If he thus pictures to himself the fellowship and joys of heaven, his sufferings will be lightened, and his hour shortened; and his soul will be moved with godly impulses.

PRAYER.

How amiable are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts; my soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. O when shall I come where I shall see Thy face, and stand before Thy throne in the company of all the angels and the elect? O what glory and bliss shall be mine, when I have been parted from my body and have fallen asleep in Christ. I shall be transported to the habitations of peace, crowned with glory and honor, and made partaker of the heavenly splendor. O what glory and joy wait for me! I shall see the Triune God face to face. What I here believed, I there shall see. What I could not understand here, I shall know and understand there. There I shall be irradiated and filled with heavenly light. What joy it will be to behold the great and glorious God in all His majesty!

Therefore, O Lord, I pray with longing heart: As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God? The highest joy

is to see God, in whom we here believed but whom we have never seen. This vision of God will constitute the highest delight, the sweetest joy, the most perfect blessedness. My sorrow shall be turned into joy, my tears into smiles, my tribulation into gladness, my misery into delight, my woe into happiness, and my heart-ache into perfect bliss.

In heaven I shall also live in the midst of a joyful and blessed company. Here I am among men, and have been obliged to spend my life among both friends and foes. But in heaven I shall be in the company of the thousands of angels who, splendid and glorious, hover around God's throne, and sing, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." There I shall meet all the godly and elect who have lived since the beginning of the world. There I shall meet my dear ones and friends who have died before me; and I shall dwell with them in sweetest fellowship forever. O how well it shall be with my soul then! Hope shall be changed to glad fruition; I shall be ever with the Lord; no sorrow shall ever touch me. And all this shall be not for an hour only or for a year, but without ceasing, for ever and ever. Amen.

HYMN.

7, 6. D.

Jerusalem the glorious!
The glory of th' elect!
O dear and future vision
That eager hearts expect:
E'en now by faith I see thee;
E'en here thy walls discern;
To thee my thoughts are kindled,
And strive and pant and yearn.

Jerusalem the only,
That look'st from heaven below!
In thee is all my glory;
In me is all my woe!
And though my body may not,
My spirit seeks thee fain,
Till flesh and earth return me
To earth and flesh again.

O land that seest no sorrow!
O state that fear'st no strife!
O princely land of glory!
O realm and home of life!
Exult, O dust and ashes,
The Lord shall be thy part:
His, only His, forever,
Thou shalt be, and thou art.

—*Bernard de Morlaix, about 1150.*
John Mason Neale, Tr. 1851. a.

THE DYING PERSON COMFORTS HIM-
SELF WITH THE THOUGHT OF
GOD'S HELP.

MEDITATION.

Song of Sol. 2: 5, 6. Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.

THE presence of God with us when we suffer cannot be other than sweet and comforting to the soul. God is not only near to all His creatures, but He is in a special manner near to the believers in life and in death. Oh, if God should open the eyes of the godly, as He did those of Elisha's servant, what a holy company they would see around their bed! How many angels they would behold there, already rejoicing because they are about to lead another soul to glory! This is why many pious persons, when about to die, have exclaimed, "O how light it is around my bed! Do you not see yonder bright light?" What they saw must assuredly have been angels.

The believer should feel assured of the help of the Triune God. (1) Our heavenly Father will remember His Fatherly faithfulness, and support His child. (2) Jesus will not desert in their death-struggle those souls which He has purchased with His blood. (3) The Holy Spirit

will comfort and refresh them. Though sight, hearing, and all the senses should fail, the dying one knows that the promise, "I will be with him in trouble," shall be fulfilled in him in the hour of his death. Blessed is he whom God permits to experience all this when he dies!

PRAYER.

"Come, Lord Jesus," I now say with the spiritual Bride; "even so, come," and take my soul unto Thyself. I have had a foretaste of heaven, and I long and thirst for its fulness. I am not alarmed by the thought of death; for I die in the love of my heavenly Father. He who through all my life has sustained, nourished, led, and guided me, — should He now, when the end of my life approaches, forsake me? O no; His great love for me will not permit Him to do so. If an earthly father remains with his sick child, and helps him as much as he can, how much more certainly will my heavenly Father now grant me His almighty support! Yea, He will bestow upon me the inheritance which Jesus has acquired for me by His death. He will bid me inherit the kingdom prepared for me from the foundation of the world.

I am not afraid of death; for I die united with Jesus Christ. I entered into fellowship with Him here by faith, and that fellowship shall

never cease. I am a living member of the body of Christ. He is the head. And just as the head knows how the members fare, so Jesus knows how matters stand with me. I am in Him, and He in me; and in this fellowship with Him I desire to die. He has said: "I am with you always even unto the end of the world;" and He will be with me in death. Just as He loved His own even unto the end, and gave Himself into death for them; so He loves His own when they are about to die. Since I am safe in Jesus' arms, death is not terrible to me. I have with me Him who has robbed death of its sting. Here already Jesus has clothed me with the garments of salvation, and covered me with the robe of His righteousness; there He will put upon me the white robe of honor and glory. The Bridegroom of my soul will lead me to the wedding; the Friend of my soul will make me partaker of His glory. My Lord will fulfil in me His promise: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be."

Death has no terrors for me; for I die in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. He has consecrated my heart as His temple in this life: and He will remain united with me in death. He who has so often comforted me in my sadness, cheered me in suffering, refreshed me in trouble, and sustained me under the cross, will not forsake me in my last hour, but will bear witness

with my spirit that I am certainly God's child. Though my speech should fail me and deprive me of the power to pray, He will make intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered. Yea, since He is the earnest of our inheritance, He already assures me, that I am an heir of heaven and shall enter upon its full possession. The Father holds out the crown to me; Jesus takes me by the hand and leads me to eternal happiness; the Holy Spirit adorns me with light and gladness. The holy angels rejoice over my entrance into the heavenly life of joy. All the elect and saints of God extend a joyous welcome. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M. 6 lines.

(O höre Gott, in meiner Not.)

O Lord my God, I cry to Thee!
In my distress Thou helpest me.
To Thee myself I all commend:
O swiftly now Thine angel send
To guide me home, and cheer my heart,
Since Thou dost call me to depart.

O Jesus Christ, Thou Lamb of God,
Once slain to take away our load;
Now let Thy cross, Thine agony,
Avail to save and solace me;
Thy death to open heaven, and there
Bid me the joy of angels share.

O Holy Spirit, at the end,
Sweet Comforter, be Thou my Friend;
When death and hell assail me sore,
Leave me, O leave me nevermore,
But bear me safely through the strife,
As Thou hast promised, into life.

— *Nicholas Selnecker, 1587.*
Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1858.

THE DYING PERSON DESIRES TO DIE TRUSTING IN JESUS.

MEDITATION.

Acts 7: 58. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

DYING persons often complain that they have to contend against all kinds of wrong thoughts, of which they cannot rid themselves. In order to banish them, the believer will do well (1) to bring before his mind in faith and holy contemplation the picture of Jesus on the cross, and to reflect thus: "Jesus' wounds were endured for *me*; they shall be my only refuge in death. Jesus' blood was shed for *me*; His blood cleanses and justifies *me*. Jesus' outstretched arms are ready to embrace *me*, and to draw *me* into heaven. He died upon the cross, in order that *my* death might be sweetened, and that *I* through death might enter upon

eternal life." These and similar reflections will drive away the earthly thoughts, quiet the mind, and cheer the heart.

In this contemplation the believer (2) should place all his confidence in the Saviour of the world. He should appropriate the merit and righteousness of Christ, that he may come before God, and say: O, for the sake of the righteousness, blood, death, and merit of my Jesus, be merciful to me. In Him I live and die, and through Him I hope to enter upon the joys of heaven.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, dearest Saviour! I must leave this world: the harbingers of death continually increase in number, and announce in unmistakable accents that the end of my life is at hand! Therefore I turn to Thee alone, and say, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. O my Redeemer! Thou hast redeemed me from sin and from the power of the devil with Thy precious blood, and with Thy innocent sufferings and death. O let that blood now avail for me, that, justified by it, I may be able to stand before Thy judgment-seat. If Satan would accuse me, I will show him Thy bleeding wounds; if my sins would condemn me, I will grasp the ransom for my sins, Thy precious blood. In the agony of death I will cling to Thy all-sufficient merit. Thou art my Saviour: O

save me, forgive my sins, bestow upon me Thy perfect righteousness, bring me to life eternal.

Thou, O Christ, art the life; therefore I shall not die though I cease to breathe; for I live in Thee, and Thou in me. And my life in Thee shall now become perfect: I shall live in Thy presence eternally, and neither things present nor things to come shall be able to separate me from Thee. Thou art the way; O lead me through the dark valley of death to eternal life. Thou art the truth, and hast hitherto fulfilled all Thy gracious promises to me; fulfil those also in which Thou sayest: "Where I am, there shall also my servant be;" and again, "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." Take me now unto Thyself where Thou art. Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word. Draw me unto Thee, to the full enjoyment of Thy heavenly blessings.

Lord, I call to mind how Thou didst die for me on the cross, how Thou didst shed Thy precious blood, how Thou didst give Thy life for me. O wash and cleanse me from all my sins with Thy precious blood. For the sake of Thy holy wounds let me obtain grace and mercy. Thou art the Lamb of God, who didst permit Thyself to be crucified for me. Through Thy blood I am reconciled to God. Thou art my Highpriest, who intercedest for me. Thou art the Mighty

One, who helpst me; the Prince of Peace, who receivest me into the habitations of peace.

O Jesus, I come to Thee; I take hold on Thee; I cling to Thee. I say: "I will leave my Jesus never! On the cross for me He died; Love shall draw me to Him ever. At His feet I will abide. Of my life the light forever, I will leave my Jesus never." Yea, I will think of Jesus only. He shall be the Light and Salvation of my soul, the Strength of my Life, my Sun and Joy, my Desire and Aspiration, the object of my thinking and planning, and my All in All. Away, vain thoughts! I will delight myself in the contemplation of Christ's merit and atonement. I will call to mind His holy wounds; I will comfort myself with the remembrance of His bitter sufferings for me. My last word shall be "Jesus," and my last thought shall be "Jesus, Jesus." Amen.

HYMN.

L. M. 6 lines.

(Herr Jesu Christ, wahr Mensch und Gott.)

Lord Jesus Christ, true man and God,
Who borest anguish, scorn, the rod,
And diedst at last upon the tree
To bring Thy Father's grace to me:
I pray Thee, through that bitter woe,
Let me, a sinner, mercy know.

When comes the hour of failing breath,
And I must wrestle, Lord, with death,
When from my sight all fades away,
And when my tongue no more can say,
And when mine ears no more can hear,
And when my heart is racked with fear;

When all my mind is darkened o'er,
And human help can do no more:
Then come, Lord Jesus, come with speed,
And help me in my hour of need;
Lead me from this dark vale beneath,
And shorten then the pangs of death.

Joyful my resurrection be;
Thou in the Judgment plead for me,
And hide my sins, Lord from Thy face,
And give me life, of Thy dear grace.
I trust Thee utterly, my Lord,
For Thou hast promised in Thy Word.

Dear Lord, forgive us all our guilt;
Help us to wait until Thou wilt
That we depart; and let our faith
Be brave, and conquer e'en in death:
Firm resting on Thy sacred Word,
Until we sleep in Thee, our Lord.

— *Paul Eber*, 1557.

Miss Winkworth. Tr. 1855.

THE DYING PERSON PRAYS FOR A
HAPPY END.

MEDITATION.

I Kings 19: 4. It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life: for I am not better than my fathers.

WHEN in Old Testament times any person brought an offering to God, it had to be, not a compulsory, but a voluntary offering. So it is also with our dying. A man should not die unwillingly and from sheer compulsion, murmuring, and rebellious, but should (1) acquaint himself in his days of health with the glory which is prepared for us yonder, — the crown, the white robe, and the joy which shall be ours after death. (2) He should acquaint himself also with the way which leads to that glory; namely, with Christ Jesus, so that he may persevere in faith and a holy life until death.

Then when the hour which God has appointed for his departure approaches, he should joyfully lift up his eyes to heaven, and pray God for a happy end. Such an end will be ours, if we commit our body and soul to the Triune God, keep Jesus Christ always before us, pray fervently, and thus wait for our final hour. At the same time we may pray God to grant us a quiet, gentle, rational, and blessed end. If the dying

person occasionally does or says some irrational things, these will be more noticeable to those who surround him than to the dying person himself, who all the while remains in the sweet fellowship of Jesus.

PRAYER.

Merciful and gracious God! I perceive that the time of my departure has come, and the hour is at hand when I shall depart in peace, and lay me down to rest. My eyes fail, my strength is gone, and soon, it seems, I shall pass away. Therefore I come to Thee, and utter a last prayer: I commend my body and soul to Thee O Lord; grant me a blessed end for Jesus Christ's sake. Lord God, heavenly Father, who hast created me, preserved me, and sustained me till now, graciously receive my soul. O Jesus, who hast redeemed and washed me with Thy blood, let me now in true faith, trusting in Thy merit and atonement, die blessed. O Lord Jesus, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. O blessed Holy Spirit, my Comforter and Stay, forsake me not, but give me peace and the comforting assurance that I am an heir of everlasting life. Pray in me and with me; make intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Behold, I am ready to leave the earth, and long only for Thee, and to be with Thee, O Triune

God. As Israel had its year of jubilee, when every slave received back his freedom and his inheritance; so, O God, when I die, my year of Jubilee begins, and I shall be freed from the service of sin and from every cross, and attain to the perfect freedom of the children of God in eternal life. O my Jesus, open for me the door of heaven; guide and lead me to life eternal, to the assembly of the saints in light.

O my God, give me a rational end; let me remain in the possession of my senses till the last moment of my life. Keep me occupied with good and holy thoughts, that I may always keep Christ before me. And if my eyes should fail me soon, refresh me in my soul with Thy heavenly comfort and light. Let Jesus ever be present to my soul. Let me rejoice in His blood that was shed for me, seek shelter in His opened side, comfort myself with His merit, and grasp His righteousness in true faith.

If it be Thy will, grant me a quiet death. Preserve me from irrational conduct, temptations, and distracting thoughts. Let my heart, which has been Thy dwelling here, gently cease to beat. Let me die peacefully in Thy arms. Give me a blessed end, and let me soon behold Thy holy face with joy. O Triune God, bless my departure from this mortal state, and my entrance upon the joyful eternity. The Lord bless me

and keep me; the Lord make His face shine upon me and be gracious unto me; the Lord lift up His countenance upon me, and give me peace. In the name of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I live and I die. In His name I close my eyes; to Him and His grace I commend my soul. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

(Mein Gott, in deine Hände.)

My God, to Thee I now commend
My soul; for Thou, O Lord,
Dost live and love me without end,
And wilt perform Thy word.

To whom else should I make my plea,
That heavenly life be mine?
All souls, my God, belong to Thee;
My soul is also Thine.

Thou gav'st my spirit at my birth;
Take back what Thou hast given;
And with the Lord I served on earth
Grant me to live in heaven.

My soul is sprinkled with the blood
Thy Son hath shed for us,
And in Thy sight is pure and good,
Adorned and radiant thus.

Thou my deliverer wast of yore;
From sin Thou mad'st me free:

Now faithful God,-do Thou once more
In death deliver me.

Thou liv'st and lovest without end,
Thou dost perform Thy word:
My parting soul I now commend
To Thee, my God and Lord.

—*Philip Frederic Hiller, 1765.*
Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1855.

PRAYER OF THE BY-STANDERS FOR THE
DYING ONE.

O HOLY Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come! Behold we also come to Thee now, and plead for him who is dying.

Lord God, the Father in heaven, have mercy upon him. Behold, Thy child is sick; behold, Thy child is dying! O let him now receive the child's portion, the inheritance in heaven, the salvation of his soul. Forgive him all the sins which he has committed against Thee all the days of his life, and look upon him with favor. Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon this dying one. Thou hast redeemed him with Thy precious blood, Thou hast died for him; O, therefore, impute not to him his sins, but impute to him Thy righteousness and merit,

wash him with Thy precious blood, clothe him with Thy righteousness, and let him now appear before the throne of God as one who is cleansed by Thy blood. Lord God the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon this dying one. Keep him in the faith, bear witness with his spirit that he is a child of God, and make intercession for him with groanings which cannot be uttered. Sanctify him, strengthen him, lead him to life eternal.

O Holy Trinity, receive this dying one with favor. Remember not the sins of his youth nor his transgressions; according to Thy mercy remember Thou him for Thy goodness sake, O Lord. Receive his spirit into Thy hands, and let it partake of eternal joy. Grant a happy and glorious resurrection on the last day to the body which is now dying. Give it meanwhile a soft repose in the cool earth till, in that general resurrection, soul and body shall be re-united, and shall enter upon the blessedness of heaven.

And now, O Lord, Lord, while his distress and agony grow greater and greater, let him not forget to remember the crucified Jesus. When his eyes fail, let a bright light arise in his soul. Yea, O Jesus, Thou true Morning Star, light him unto eternal life. When he is no longer able to see us, grant that he may constantly see Thee, O Triune God, by faith, till he shall see Thee

face to face. When his lips now close, and he is no longer able to pray, do Thou, O Jesus, pray for him. Be his Intercessor with Thy heavenly Father. Help him to contend and overcome. Let the sighs of his heart be acceptable to Thee. When the death-sweat breaks out upon him, O strengthen him, and be Thou his Stay. O Triune God, be with him, and keep him in the faith till he has happily and joyfully finished his course.

Lord God the Father, what Thou hast created;
Lord God the Son, what Thou hast redeemed;
Lord God the Holy Ghost, what Thou hast sanctified, — this we commit into Thy hands. To Thy name be praise, honor, and glory now and for evermore. Amen.

SENTENCES, SCRIPTURE-PASSAGES, AND PRAYERS
WITH WHICH THE BY-STANDERS MAY COM-
FORT THE DYING ONE.

Isa. 49: 14-16. Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.

God's grace will to the end
Stronger and brighter shine;
Nor present things, nor things to come,
Shall quench the spark divine.

Blest is the man, O God,
That stays himself on Thee!
Who waits for Thy salvation, Lord,
Shall Thy salvation see.

O kind and merciful God, help me in my sufferings and in my hour of death. O my God! Thou hast ever been my gracious God and my Stay. I beseech Thee, be with me now. O Jesus, abide with me; for it is toward evening, and the day of my life is far spent. O blessed Holy Spirit, strengthen me, and keep me steadfast in the faith to my end. Enlighten me to life eternal. I desire to die trusting in the blood and wounds of Jesus. For Him I live, for Him I die. In His merit I put my trust.

Psalm 42: 1, 2. As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?

There still my thoughts are dwelling,
'Tis there I long to be;
Come, Lord, and call Thy servant
To blessedness with Thee!
Come, bid my toils be ended,
Let all my wanderings cease;
Call from the wayside lodging
To the sweet home of peace!

O Jesus, Thou Light of my soul, when my eyes become darkened, let the heavenly glory arise in my soul. Forsake me not when my sight fails me, but show me Thy bleeding image upon the cross. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou, Jesus, art with me. O my Jesus, remain with me, strengthen me in the faith, and let me be Thine own here in time and there in eternity.

Psalm 40: 17. I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: Thou art my Help and my Deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

Jesus my Truth, my Way,
My sure unerring light,
On Thee my feeble soul I stay,
Which Thou wilt lead aright.

My soul to Thee alone
Now therefore I commend:
Thou, Jesus, having loved Thine own,
Wilt love me to the end.

Yes, my Jesus, I trust in Thee, from my inmost soul. O come and release me. Give to my body its repose and take my soul to Thine eternal joys in heaven. O Jesus, hear my feeble sighing. Be my Stay in trouble. O my Saviour and Deliverer, deliver me, release me, save me. Let

Satan have no power over me. Open to me now the door to heaven and eternal life. O come quickly, redeem me, refresh me, bless me, have mercy on me.

Isa. 41: 10. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

O Jesus Christ, Thou Lamb of God,
Once slain to take away our load;
Now let Thy cross, Thine agony,
Avail to save and solace me;
Thy death to open heaven, and there
Bid me the joy of angels share.

O Jesus, my only Intercessor with Thy heavenly Father, who sittest at the right hand of God and pleadest for us! O pray for me poor sinner now in the hour of my death. I fear not; for Thou art with me. O blessed Holy Spirit, Thou Comforter in trouble, be with me with Thy consolation to my end. I have powerful help; for my Father is with me, and His angels surround me. I will die in peace.

Psalm 73: 23, 24. Nevertheless I am continually with Thee: Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory.

If Thou, my Jesus, still be nigh,
Cheerful I live, and joyful die:
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in Thee.

By Thine agony and bloody sweat, help me, O Lord God. I will not leave Thee; O abide Thou with me. O Jesus, when my death struggle begins, help me to wrestle and overcome. When the troubles of my heart are enlarged, O bring Thou me out of my distresses. I am Thine own; therefore lead me through all my troubles to joy and happiness and glory. If Thou art with me, I am not afraid: I shall die happy, and enter upon eternal joy.

Matt. 25: 23. Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

O that hope, how bright, how glorious,
'Tis His people's blest reward;
In the Saviour's strength victorious,
They at length behold their Lord:
In His kingdom they shall rest
In His love be fully blest.

O Jesus, by Thy power and the grace of Thy Holy Spirit I will be faithful unto death. I will not forsake Thee, Thou Friend of my soul. I will not desert Thee, my Shepherd. I cling to Thee, my Bridegroom. Thou alone art my delight. O dearest Friend, lead me out of sorrow to joy, out of wretchedness to bliss.

Job 19: 25-27. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another.

I know that my Redeemer lives!
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, He lives, who once was dead,
He lives, my ever-living Head.

He lives, all glory to His name!
He lives, my Jesus, still the same;
O the sweet joy this sentence gives,
I know that my Redeemer lives.

I commend myself, O Triune God, to Thy protection and grace. I commit my dearly-bought soul to Thy care. I die, but I shall rise again. I die, but I shall live again forever in heaven. O Triune God, bring me to my rest, to glory; shorten my pains, sweeten my final hour, com-

fort me with the inward consolations of Thy Holy Spirit, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. I live and I die trusting in the merit of Jesus. Let me soon behold Thy countenance amid the eternal joys of heaven.

Psalm 17: 15. As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.

There is the throne of David;
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast;
And they who, with their leader,
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of light.

O my Jesus, my soul is glad when I think of Thy glory and of the bliss which Thou hast prepared for me. I leave the world willingly, because I am going to my Jesus, the Bridegroom of my soul. O how happy and blissful I shall be, when Jesus leads my soul as His bride to the marriage, puts upon me the white robe, places the crown upon my head, and after all the afflictions, pains, and sorrows of earth, grants me eternal joy and peace.

Heb. 4: 9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

O land that seest no sorrow!
O state that fear'st no strife!
O princely land of glory!
O realm and home of life!
Exult, O dust and ashes,
The Lord shall be thy part:
His, only His forever,
Thou shalt be, and thou art.

I know that when I die, I shall leave sorrow behind me, and come into the presence of God. I shall pass from burdens to pleasure, from anxiety to peace, from vanity to bliss, from toil to rest, from afflictions to joy. Therefore my soul rejoices. O my God, here am I; take my soul, glorify it, receive it into heaven. My Jesus, I am Thine, and Thou art mine; in life and in death we shall remain inseparable.

II Cor. 5: 1. For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

There glory yet unheard of
Shall shed abroad its ray,
Resolving all enigmas,
An endless Sabbath day.

There God, our King, and Portion,
In fulness of His grace,
Shall we behold forever,
And worship face to face.

We know, by faith, we know
If this vile house of clay,
This tabernacle, sink below
In ruinous decay;

We have a house above
Not made with mortal hands;
And firm as our Redeemer's love
That heavenly fabric stands.

O dear Lord Jesus, seal in my heart the blessed assurance that, when this earthly tabernacle of mine is dissolved and I die on this bed, I shall enter the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. What a glorious mansion, what an abode of bliss Thou hast prepared for me! There there is no anxiety, distress, or sorrow, but all is joy, peace, glory, and happiness. O that we were already there! Forsake me not; I will never forsake Thee. To Thee I cling, in Thy grace I trust, in Thy wounds I hide, in reliance on Thy death I die, by Thy blood I am justified and saved.

Isa. 35: 10. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Brief life is here our portion:
 Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
 The life that knows no ending,
 The tearless life is *there*.
 O happy retribution!
 Short toil, eternal rest,
 For mortals and for sinners
 A mansion with the blest!

Remember, O Jesus, that I am redeemed with Thy precious blood. O let me enter soon into Thy heavenly Zion. I have eaten long enough the bread of sorrow; O let me soon eat the bread of heaven, the food of angels. Sorrow and sighing have here been my daily companions; let me now hear joy and gladness. Let my soul have a vision of Thy glory; gladden me after my sufferings, refresh my soul in and through Thee eternally.

II Tim. 4: 7, 8. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but to all them that love His appearing.

When comes the hour of failing breath,
 And I must wrestle, Lord, with death,

When from my sight all fades away,
And when my tongue no more can say,
And when mine ears no more can hear,
And when my heart is racked with fear;

When all my mind is darkened o'er,
And human help can do no more;
Then come, Lord Jesus, come with speed,
And help me in my hour of need;
Lead me from this dark vale beneath,
And shorten then the pangs of death.

O Jesus, help me to overcome when the final struggle begins. Stand by me, and give me the victory. When I am powerless, O my Helper, help me in my distress and weakness. Let Thy grace strengthen me, Thy blood refresh me, Thy hand preserve me, Thy holy merit cover my sins. Hold me poor wretched one in Thine arms; and, when I am faint, refresh me. After the fight the crown, after the battle the victory! O how gloriously I shall be adorned and crowned by Thee after my death. Show me the crown which Thou hast laid up for me, and gladden my soul with Thy gracious presence.

Rev. 2: 10; 3: 5. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed with white raiment.

These through fiery trials trod;
These from great afflictions came;

Now, before the throne of God,
Sealed with His almighty Name,
Clad in raiment pure and white,
Victor-palms in every hand,
Through their great Redeemer's might,
More than conquerors they stand.

Jesus I will love Thee ever. I have loved Thee in life, I will love Thee in death. O Jesus, for the sake of Thy holy wounds keep me in Thy love. I would be faithful to Thee unto death, and die faithful to Thee. Jesus in my heart! Jesus in my mind! and in His name I fall asleep!

Rom. 8: 38, 39. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

I will leave my Jesus never!
On the cross for me He died;
Love shall draw me to Him ever,
At His feet I will abide.
Of my life the light forever,
I will leave my Jesus never.

Yes, this is my resolve: I will never leave Thee, my Jesus. I will abide in faith, and cling to Thee. Death shall sever soul and body, but it

shall not sever my soul from Thee. Jesus is mine, and I am His. I lay me in His arms, and in them I live and die blessed. O how blessed I am!

James 1: 12. Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.

To the mansions of Thy love,
To the spirits of the just,
To the angel host above,
To Thyself, my only trust, —
Thou in whom I now believe,
Jesus, Lord, my soul receive.

O yes, Lord Jesus, come to me; O come quickly without delay, and take me home in peace. Give me patience and strength. I yield myself wholly to Thee, my body and my soul; keep me in the faith, and grant me a happy end. O Jesus, help me, by Thy great mercy and grace, to attain to eternal life and joy. Lord, Thou has been our dwelling-place in all generations; be my Refuge and my Salvation now, my God, my Consolation, my Deliverer, my Saviour. Receive the soul which longs for Thee. O how I long to see God's face, to dwell with the angels and saints in heaven, and to walk in heavenly brightness and glory.

Psalm 31: 5. Into Thine hand I commit my spirit:
Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord God of truth.

Jesus, Thou art my righteousness,
For all my sins were Thine:
Thy death hath bought of God my peace,
Thy life hath made Him mine.
For ever here my rest shall be,
Close to Thy bleeding side;
This all my hope and all my plea:
For me the Saviour died.

My only refuge in death, O Triune God, is in
Thee: in the mercy of my heavenly Father, in
the bleeding wounds of Jesus Christ, in the
grace of the Holy Spirit. To Thee, O Triune
God, I commit my body and soul. Receive the
dove that flies to Thee for safety. Spread Thy
protecting wings over me. And if Satan should
seek to devour me, let Thine angels guard me
and say: "This child shall remain unharmed."

Heb. 12: 22, 23. But ye are come unto mount Zion,
and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly
Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,
to the general assembly and church of the first-born,
which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of
all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest!
Beneath Thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice oppressed:

I know not, O I know not,
What social joys are there!
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare!

And when I fain would sing them
My spirit fails and faints,
And vainly would it image
Th' assembly of the saints.
They stand, those halls of Zion,
Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And all the martyr throng.

My Jesus, how glorious will be the vision,
when I behold Thee in Thy glory amid the
throng of angels and saints in heaven! I re-
joice when I think of it. I shall leave the earth,
but I shall enter into glory; I shall leave my
sorrows, but I shall enter into gladness; I shall
leave my fellow-men, but I shall enter into the
company of the holy angels.

Heb. 13: 8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and
to-day, and for ever.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee!
Let the water and the blood,
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the perfect cure,
Save me, Lord, and make me pure.

O Jesus, I seek refuge in Thee. Let Thy sweet name refresh my weary soul. Let the shelter of Thine all-atoning death be over me in death and before the judgment of God, that I may be justified here and enjoy eternal life hereafter.

John 10: 27, 28. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

Thine for ever! Saviour keep
This Thy frail and trembling sheep;
Safe alone beneath Thy care,
Let me all Thy goodness share.

Thine forever! Thou my Guide,
All my wants by Thee supplied,
All my sins by Thee forgiven,
Lead me, Lord, from earth to heaven.

O yes, Jesus my Shepherd, bring me, Thy poor sheep, to the blessedness of heaven. Let not Satan pluck me out of Thy hand; Thou art greater and mightier than Satan. Thine I am; Thine I would remain. Satan has no title or claim to me; but Thou hast; I am Thy possession, and would remain Thine forever. O take my soul, like a weary lamb, into Thine arms, and bear it to heaven. O how happy, how blessed to be with my Jesus!

Rev. 14:13. Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them.

Hark a voice divides the sky:
Happy are the faithful dead,
In the Lord who sweetly die;
They from all their toils are freed.

Them the Spirit hath declared
Blest, unutterably blest;
Jesus is their great Reward,
Jesus is their endless Rest.

Followed by their works they go
Where their Head has gone before;
Reconciled by grace below,
Grace hath opened mercy's door.

O Jesus, give to my soul the comforting assurance that I die in Thee. O Jesus, Thou hast lived in me, and I in Thee; therefore I would now die in Thee, in Thy love, in Thy wounds, in Thy grace. Let my sorrow and sadness, my pain and suffering cease; and lead me to eternal life, where I shall rest from my labors, my suffering, and pain. O Jesus, hear me; even so, come, Lord Jesus.

II Tim. 4: 18. The Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto His heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

From this state of sin and pain,
From this world of grief and strife,
From this body's mortal chain,
From this weak, imperfect life —
Thou in whom I now believe,
Jesus, Lord, my soul receive.

O mighty God, remember me in mercy, and have compassion upon me. O give me a rational, quiet, and gentle end. The day of my death is my day of redemption, and the hour of my death is the hour when I enter into eternal joy. O grant me a rational mind to the very end, that I may joyfully hear the consolations which may be spoken to me; and grant, if it be Thy will, that I may give evidence to those who surround me that I abide in faith and hope. And thus, through a blessed death, deliver Thou me from all evil.

Matt. 25: 34. Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

When ends life's transient dream,
When death's cold sullen stream
Shall o'er me roll,

Blest Saviour, then, in love,
Fear and distrust remove;
O bear me safe above
A ransomed soul.

O my Jesus, when I part from my body, let me hear Thy welcome words: "Come thou blessed of my Father." And on the last day let my body and soul inherit an eternal kingdom. I cling to Thee by faith, confident that in and through Thee I shall obtain the blessing and inheritance.

Isa. 61: 10. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.

Jerusalem the glorious!
The glory of the elect!
O dear and future vision
That eager hearts expect:
E'en now by faith I see thee;
E'en here thy walls discern:
To thee my thoughts are kindled
And strive, and pant, and yearn.

The hope of heaven, where I shall wear the white robe, sweetens all the bitterness of death. Death is not bitter to me; for Jesus is with me; He comforts and sustains me. O God, who hast clothed me with the robe of righteousness, clothe

me also with the heavenly robe of joy. Thy righteousness is my righteousness; and I know, that, being justified by faith, I have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and that life and salvation are waiting for me yonder. O how gloriously appareled I shall stand before Thee!

John 3: 16. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

When sinners break the Father's laws,
The dying Son atones;
O, the dear mysteries of His Cross!
The triumph of His groans!

O dearest God and Father, let me now depart in peace in Jesus Christ. I know that Thou hast loved me, and given Thy Son for me. I have believed on Him, and would remain steadfast in this faith till the last moment of my life. O let Thy Spirit bear witness with my spirit that I am not lost. Strengthen me in the faith, and grant that what I have believed in this world, I may behold in the world to come. O Jesus, abide with me; O forsake me not.

I Peter 1: 18, 19. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness
My beauty are and glorious dress;
'Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

O mighty God, I come before Thee, not in mine own righteousness, but in the righteousness of Jesus Christ which I have put on by faith. O Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon me. O righteous God, look not upon my sin and iniquity, but upon the righteousness and holiness of Jesus which I make mine own by faith. I hide in His wounds; I die relying upon His merit. For His sake be gracious and merciful unto me.

Acts 4: 12. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Jesus! only name that's given
Under all the mighty heaven,
Whereby man, to sin enslaved,
Bursts his fetters and is saved.

Jesus! Name of wondrous love!
Human name of Him above!
Pleading only this I flee,
Helpless, O my God, to Thee.

O Jesus, my only Salvation and Refuge, I come to Thee in this hour of my death. O have mercy upon me, and forsake me not. The sweet name of Jesus, and the remembrance of His blood and wounds, and of His holy Person, shall remain in my heart and mind. Lord Jesus, I live unto Thee; Lord Jesus, I die unto Thee; Lord Jesus, living or dying I am Thine. Amen.

I John 2: 1, 2. If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

Father, though I have sinned, with Thee
An Advocate I have:
Jesus the Just shall plead for me,
The sinner Christ shall save.

O great God, the time of my departure from the world and of my appearing before Thy judgment approaches. O heavenly Father, have mercy upon me, and graciously receive me, Thy child, whom Thou hast created and loved. O Jesus, plead for me; Thou art my Mediator, In-

tercessor, and Saviour. Take away my sins, clothe me with Thy righteousness,—and I am saved. O blessed Holy Spirit, abide in my heart, and bring me to the habitations above.

John 5: 24. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies,
Even then this shall be all my plea,
“Jesus hath lived and died for me.”

O Saviour, fulfil Thy blessed promise in me. When I appear before the judgment, let me for Thy sake obtain mercy. Let me not come into condemnation nor hear the sentence of death. Keep me in faith to the end, that I may receive the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul.

Heb. 4: 16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

By Thee my prayers acceptance gain,
Although with sin defiled;
Satan accuses me in vain,
And I am owned a child.

Yes, for Christ's sake I shall obtain mercy. Lord God, the Father in heaven, have mercy upon me; Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon me; Lord God, the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me. Amen.

II Cor. 5: 21. For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Lamb of God for sinners wounded
Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded
Who on Thee their hope have built.

Jesus, Thou hast taken away my sins, and bestowed Thy righteousness upon me. What was mine, my sin and guilt, was laid upon Thee; and what was Thine, Thy righteousness, has been imputed to me. In this I rejoice; in this I find comfort. "Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness My beauty are and glorious dress; Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head." In Christ I am justified, in Him I am saved. In this my hour of death I envelop myself in His righteousness. In it I can die blessed, and find acceptance with God.

Rev. 21: 4. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

Hunger, thirst, disease unknown,
On immortal fruits they feed;
Them the Lamb amidst the throne
Shall to living waters lead;
Joy and gladness banish sighs;
Perfect love dispels all fears;
And forever from their eyes
God shall wipe away the tears.

O Jesus, I rejoice in anticipation of the hour when, with glorified vision, I shall behold Thy face. There my body shall shine as the sun; and my eyes shall no more be wet with tears, but filled with light and splendor. In Thee I shall find joy and peace. Here I am but a pilgrim and a stranger; but with Thee in heaven I shall be in my home and fatherland.

I John 1: 7. If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.

From sin and guilt, the power, the pain,
Thou wilt redeem my soul;
Lord, I believe, and not in vain;
My faith shall make me whole.

I too with Thee shall walk in white,
With all Thy saints shall prove
What is the length, and breadth and height,
And depth of perfect love.

I am in the fellowship of Jesus; in it I live
and die. O Jesus, Thou in me, and I in Thee!
There is no condemnation for me, because I am
in Thee. I shall enter into glory: the blood of
Jesus cleanses, clothes, and adorns me. O heav-
enly Father, I come to Thee in the righteousness
of Thy Son.

John 1: 29. Behold the Lamb of God, which
taketh away the sin of the world.

I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God;
He bears them all and frees us
From the accurséd load.

I bring my guilt to Jesus,
To wash my crimson stains
White, in His blood most precious,
Till not a spot remains.

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away
the sin of the world, have mercy upon me; O
Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the
sin of the world, have mercy upon me; O Christ,
Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of

the world, grant me Thy peace in time and eternity.

Luke 2: 29, 30. Lord now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.

There I shall bathe my weary soul
In seas of heavenly rest;
And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.

Yes, the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep my heart and mind in Christ Jesus unto everlasting life. Yonder are the habitations of peace. There we shall cry 'Victory,' and bear the emblems of conquest. O that I were already there!

John 17: 24. Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.

Since Thou hast died for me,
Help me to trust Thy grace,
That Thou wilt take me up to Thee,
Where I shall see Thy face.

O what a joyful and blessed meeting that will be, when I come to Thee, O Jesus, and behold Thee face to face. I have loved Thee here on

earth, even while I did not see Thee; O how I shall delight in Thee when I come where Thou art, to the assembly of the saints and elect. O how great is Thy glory! I have not heard in this life the half of what I shall there behold. O, draw me after Thee, and prepare me for a blissful entrance into Thy glory.

Rom. 14: 7, 8. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

Close to my Saviour's bloody Tree
My soul, untired, shall ever cleave;
Despised and crucified with Thee,
With Christ resolved to die and live:
My prayer, my grand ambition this,
Living and dying, to be His.

O great God, I have become Thine in Holy Baptism; I have remained Thine by faith; let me now in death also be Thine own. O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who hast made sufficient atonement for all my sins, and who art my only Helper and Comforter, let me hide in Thy wounds. Amen.

II Tim. 2: 8. Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead.

Jesus lives! no longer now
Can Thy terrors, Death, appal me.
Jesus lives! by this I know
From the grave He will recall me.
Brighter scenes will then commence;
This shall be my confidence.

O Jesus, Thou art deeply engraved in my heart. O yes, I remember Thine anguish and pain, Thy blood which was shed for me, Thy holy wounds. Jesus, I embrace Thee, I press Thee to my heart. O forsake me not; I long for Thee, O my Saviour! Would that I were already with Thee!

Luke 23: 42, 43. Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto Thee, To-day thou shalt be with me in paradise.

When in this solemn hour of death
I wait Thy just decree,
Be this the prayer of my last breath,
Good Lord, remember me.

O Jesus, my only desire is to have Thy grace and mercy. Receive into Thy hands my soul which Thou hast purchased with Thy precious blood. O, let it remain in Thy keeping, and

enter into the joys of paradise. I also say with the dying thief: Lord Jesus, remember me; remember, that I am Thy child, that I have been purchased with Thy precious blood to be Thine own. Let me be with Thee to-day in paradise.

I Tim. 1: 15. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

My soul is on Thy promise cast,
And lo, I claim my part:
The universal pardon's past;
O seal it on my heart.

Thou canst not now Thy grace deny;
Thou canst not but forgive:
Lord, if Thy justice asks me why —
In Jesus I believe.

Lord, I wait for Thy salvation. Jesus saves sinners; He saves me also. Jesus receives sinners; He receives me also. I belong to Jesus; I shall remain His. I lift up mine eyes to heaven, and see Jesus beckoning to me.

Psalm 73: 25, 26. Whom have I in heaven but Thee?
and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength
of my heart, and my portion forever.

Suffering Son of man be near me,
In my sufferings to sustain;
By Thy sorer griefs to cheer me,
By Thy more than mortal pain.

By Thy fainting in the garden,
By Thy dreadful death I pray,
Write upon my heart Thy pardon;
Take my sins and fears away.

By the travail of Thy spirit,
By Thine outcry on the Tree,
By Thine agonizing merit,
Gracious Lord, remember me.

O Jesus, my life ebbs away; take me to Thyself. My Shepherd, receive Thy sheep; My Bridegroom, receive Thy bride; my Father, receive Thy child; my Jesus, receive the soul which Thou hast purchased with Thy blood. This I pray, this I desire; and thus I close my eyes.

Rev. 7: 9, 14. After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

What are these in bright array,
This innumerable throng,
Round the altar night and day
Hymning one triumphant song?
“Worthy is the Lamb, once slain,
Blessing, honor, glory, power,
Wisdom, riches to obtain,
New dominion every hour.”

O my Jesus, I rejoice over the white robe and the beauteous crown which Thou wilt give me. Meanwhile I wash myself in Thy precious blood, and make Thy merit my own. O, for Thy blood and righteousness' sake receive me into the eternal life of joy above.

Luke 23, 46. Acts 7: 59. Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

My soul to Thee alone
Now therefore I commend;
Thou Jesus, having loved Thine own,
Wilt love me to the end.

O my Jesus, I now pray in Thy words: Father into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Thy last prayer on the cross shall be my last prayer also. Lord Jesus, to Thee I live, to Thee I die. Living or dying I am Thine.

II Peter 3: 13. Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

Jerusalem, my happy home!
My soul still pants for Thee.
Now shall my labors have an end,
And I Thy joys shall see.

O Thou Holy Triune God! Receive now my soul into Thy heavenly kingdom. O come, Lord, Jesus, I wait for Thee. O lead me to Thine everlasting joys. Lord God the Father, what Thou hast created; Lord God the Son, what Thou hast redeemed; Lord God the Holy Ghost, what Thou hast sanctified, — this I commend into Thy hands. To Thy holy name be praise and glory now and for ever. Amen.

Rev. 22: 12. Behold, I came quickly, and my reward is with me.

Even so, come Lord Jesus. Fulfil the promise of Thy speedy coming. Deliver me from the sorrows of this world, give me the crown of life, bestow upon me the kingdom which Thou hast prepared for me. Receive me into the glorious company of those who sing around Thy throne in heaven. Delay not; come quickly, Lord Jesus. Amen.

SENTENCES AND PRAYERS FOR A DYING
PERSON.

From the Hymn:

“When my last hour is close at hand.”

1.

“When my last hour is close at hand,”

O My Jesus, Thou knowest best how close at hand my last hour may be; therefore teach me that mine age is as nothing before Thee, and that, verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Keep me in the faith, that I may trust in the Triune God in whom I have been baptized, and may place all my hope, O Jesus, in Thy merit, blood, and wounds. O, in my last hour preserve me from temptations; let Thy left hand be under my head, and Thy right hand embrace me. Refresh me in my final hour through the consolations of the Holy Spirit, and let me hear joy and gladness. Be with me when my end comes.

“My last sad journey taken,”

O yes, my Jesus, I shall journey the way of death; but I do not fear, if Thou, O Jesus, art with me. My death is but my going to the Father. How glad I am that I shall come to my heavenly Father, and to Thee, my Jesus! There

I shall find peace, joy, comfort, gladness, light, a white robe, and a beautiful crown. O how happy I shall be! There all my sorrows and afflictions shall end, and I shall have rest, happiness and salvation. Be with me, O Jesus, on this journey through death to life eternal. Chase away all enemies of my soul, and give me the joyfulness of faith and the sweetness of Thy consolation, that I may begin and finish my death-journey happy and blessed.

“Do Thou, Lord Jesus, by me stand,”

O yes, Lord Jesus, guide me from this temporal life to everlasting life. Though the way of death be dark, I shall nevertheless walk in the light, if Thou, O Jesus, art my Light. Stand by my death-bed, and receive my soul when it leaves the body. When I close my eyes in death, let my soul's eyes behold Thee. Conduct my soul to Thy holy habitation, to the holy angels, and to the assembly of the elect. Yea, accompany me before the throne of Thy heavenly Father, and present me there as one who belongs to Thee, that I may there obtain grace, and be received as an heir of eternal life. When I leave the world stand by me,

"Let me not be forsaken."

In my dying hour no one can help me but Thou, O Jesus, alone. Help me, and strengthen my faith; help me, and bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of God, and that now, as a child of God, I shall receive my eternal inheritance. O forsake me not when I grow pale in death. Forsake me not when my eyes break, but remain with me as the light of my soul. Forsake me not when my hearing fails, but instruct, console, and refresh me inwardly in my soul. Forsake me not when my speech leaves me and I am no longer able to pray, but pray for me then, O Jesus; and Thou, O Holy Spirit, pray in me, and make intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered. Forsake me not when I depart from this world but lead me to the blessedness of heaven.

"O Lord, my spirit I resign"

into Thy care and grace. O Jesus, Thou hast purchased my soul with Thy precious blood; wash and cleanse it, that it may be a vessel pure and well-pleasing to God. When the end of my earthly life approaches, let me, if it be Thy will, retain my reason to the last, that I may turn my heart and mind and eyes to Thee, and pray as long as my tongue can stammer, and sigh as

long as there is still breath in my body; yea, that I may be able to hear for my comfort and joy the words of encouragement spoken by those who surround me. Give me, if it be Thy will, a joyful end: let me, O Jesus, enjoy Thy fellowship in death, experience the sweetness of Thy indwelling, and be refreshed by the consolations of the Holy Spirit. Give me a blessed end: let me calmly and peacefully fall asleep in faith, and remain united with Thee before death, in death, and after death. In order that this may be the case, I commend my spirit

“Into Thy loving hands divine;”

O how well it will there be cared for. Behold, I daily commend my soul to Thee; this, therefore, shall be my prayer now: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. My Jesus, with Thy precious blood Thou hast redeemed my soul from sin and from the power of the devil; therefore I commit it to Thee: it is Thine, and shall remain Thine to eternity. Receive it into the eternal joys of heaven, to gladness and glory and eternal happiness. Thy hands are mighty; no one can pluck my soul out of them. The world cannot do so; for it has no claim on me: Satan cannot do so; for Thou hast overcome him. Thy hands are faithful; in them my soul is well taken care of;

"Tis safe within Thy keeping."

I give my soul into Thy keeping till the last day, when Thou shalt unite it with my glorified body, and shalt let soul and body enjoy the bliss of heaven. Meanwhile gladden, comfort, and refresh my soul in Thy glory. Let my faith be followed by sight, turmoil by rest, sorrow by joy, affliction by deliverance. Let my soul, in the midst of the angels and elect, behold the glory which Thou hast prepared for Thy children.

2.

"Countless as sands upon the shore,"

If the sands upon the shore are many, my sins are more. I have sinned often by thoughts; I have sinned often by words and foolish conversation; I have sinned often in deeds and actions, from my youth up till this very hour. If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? If Thou wilt bring the thoughts of my heart before Thy judgment, I shall be ashamed; if I must give an account of every idle word, I am lost; if Thou wilt judge and reward me according to my deeds, O what will become of me?

"My sins may then appal me,"

O yes, my Jesus, I think now of my sins, and I sincerely repent that I have in my life-time

grieved Thee so much, so often, and in so many ways, by thoughts, words, and deeds. O, I mourn over my sins in my inmost soul. I am sorry that I have offended my Creator, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier. O, that I had not done so! And if I had it to do again, I would act otherwise. But, O Jesus, wash me clean from all my sins with Thy precious blood, and remember them no more forever. O my Jesus, when my sins rise before me here on my sick-bed, and would terrify and accuse me, do Thou, O Jesus, come to my rescue; show me Thy holy wounds, blot out with Thy holy blood the whole account of sin which stands against me, and seal forgiveness on my heart through Thy Holy Spirit.

“Yet, though my conscience vex me sore,”

Alas, my sins fill me with anxiety and terror. O sin, how bitter art thou on the bed of death, how dreadful the qualms of conscience which thou dost produce! But O my Jesus, I pray for grace. Mercifully forgive me all the sins which I have committed against Thee during my life upon earth. O Jesus, for the sake of Thy blood which was shed for me, forgive me all my transgressions; for the sake of Thy holy wounds, have mercy upon me. For Thine eternal love's sake receive me into Thy favor. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness;

according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Then shall my conscience be quieted, and my heart be at rest. O, I do not deny my iniquities and sins, but acknowledge before the all-knowing God that they are very, very many. Yet

“Despair shall not enthrall me.”

Why should I despair? My heavenly Father will not cast out His poor repenting child. I will not despair; Jesus is my Saviour, my Mediator, and my Intercessor with His heavenly Father. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemmeth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. I will not despair: the Holy Ghost will be my Stay in the hour of my death, and will bear witness with my spirit, that I am a child of God, that my sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, and that the mercy of God will take me in its arms. Whenever, therefore, Satan, my sins, and my conscience would terrify and threaten me, Thou, O Jesus, shalt be the Refuge and Consolation of my soul.

*“And as I draw my latest breath
I’ll think, Lord Christ, upon Thy Death,”*

I will think at my death, O Jesus, of Thee on the cross: how Thou didst die for me, how Thou didst shed Thy blood for me. And I will say: Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world; O Lamb of God, who diedst for me upon the cross, have mercy upon me. O Jesus, Thy death is my life. Because Thou hast died for me, I shall not suffer eternal condemnation and death, but shall have life through Thee. For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The remembrance of Thy bitter sufferings and death, O Jesus, shall ever be in my heart.

“And there find consolation.”

Thy wounds were made for me, and in them I will seek refuge. “Jesus, Lover of my soul, Let me to thy bosom fly, While the nearer waters roll, While the tempest still is high. Hide me, O my Saviour, hide, Till the storm of life is past; Safe into the haven guide; O receive my soul at last!” The water and the blood which flowed from Thy wounded side assure me of my cleansing from sin, and of my reconciliation with God. My last thought shall be of Jesus’ blood and

wounds and death; and my last word shall be "Jesus, Jesus, Jesus." O Jesus Christ, Son of God, who hast done so much for me, hide me in Thy wounds. Thou art my only Helper and Comforter. Thy wounds secure for me the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life. As my body shall be enclosed in a casket, so will I enclose my soul in the wounds of Jesus. There it shall be safe; there Satan cannot harm it; there no enemy of the soul can touch it. In those wounds it shall have rest and peace, and shall be brought to the assembly of the elect.

"A member of Thy body I!"

O what a comfort it is in the hour of my death, that I am a member of Thy holy Body. In Holy Baptism I have been born again, and have become a member of the Christian Church, of which Jesus is the Head. And if Jesus is my Head, and I His member, I know that I shall also be where my Jesus is. But Jesus is in glory; consequently I shall arrive in glory also. The Head cannot leave the members behind, but will draw them after Him. Yes, my Jesus will draw me after Him to His eternal heavenly kingdom of joy. He has promised: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." O Jesus, Thou hast been lifted up and exalted to the right hand of Thy heavenly Father; draw

me unto Thee; bring me to Thine eternal heavenly bliss. Yes, Thou wilt make me, Thy child, partaker of Thy glory.

“With joy this truth I ponder!”

When the Head wears the crown, the members rejoice. And because Jesus is crowned with glory and honor, I also shall obtain the victory after the conflict, and receive a glorious robe and a beautiful crown from the hand of the Lord. This is a sure consolation; for since I am a child of God, I am also an heir, an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. I shall receive a heavenly inheritance, and be exalted to glory. O should I not be glad to die, glad to suffer with Christ, that I may live and reign with Him eternally? This shall be my constant comfort: Jesus, my Head, will glorify me, His member; Jesus, my Saviour, will give me life eternal. Therefore I also say, My Jesus,

*“From Thee I shall not part, though death
My soul and body sunder.”*

Though in this life a head may be severed from the body, no one can sever me from Jesus. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able

to separate me from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. No cross or sickness can do so; for I will patiently bear them; no conflict or sickness of soul, for Jesus will be with me in them and help me to overcome. Even death itself cannot do so, but will only open the door for me to go to Jesus. I will remain united with Christ in life, in suffering, in death. Body and soul may part; but Jesus and my soul shall never part. I must leave the world and be separated from my friends; but from Jesus never! O Jesus, I have ever enclosed Thee in my heart; there I would hold Thee fast in true faith till Thou bringest me to Thy heavenly glory. Jesus is mine and I am His.

Though the need be great in death, it is no need to me, because Jesus is with me. Or wilt Thou, my Jesus, forsake me in this hour? O faithful Friend of my soul, Thou wilt not do so. Thou hast promised "I will be with thee in trouble." Fulfil Thy gracious promise. Thou wilt sweeten my last hour with Thy presence. Let me find comfort in the remembrance of Thy sufferings and death for me, and cling to Thee firmly by faith. Give me grace to say: Lord Jesus, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me. Lord Jesus, in Thee I live, in Thee I die; Lord Jesus, I am Thine in life and in death. He who dies thus dies well;

"For though I die, I die in Thee;"

Yes, my Jesus, I will gladly die, since I know that I shall come to Thee in glory. I will die in faith, and trust in Thy merit, sufferings, and death. I die happy, because I die in Thee, longing for Thee. I die as Thy child whom Thou hast hitherto led. I die as Thy sheep which no man can pluck out of Thy hand. I die as Thine heir, for whom the joy and bliss of heaven are prepared. For

"Eternal life Thou hast for me"

prepared above. In heaven with Thee, in everlasting joy, there shall be no grief or sorrow, no sickness or pain, no suffering or death, but all shall be joy and happiness, peace, delight, sweetness, light, and glory eternally. O Jesus, how I rejoice in anticipation of that life and glory! Here I have had few good days, and my daily food has been toil and trouble; but in heaven I shall have all good days, days of joy and delight. There sorrow and tears shall be no more. There my Saviour shall wipe away all tears from my eyes. O happy the hour when I shall reach that joy! And that I shall reach it, I know; for that life of bliss Thou hast for me

"Secured by Thine own dying."

O Lamb of God, Thou hast died for me, and art the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. For me Thou wast mocked and crucified and slain. Thy death has sweetened my death. All that Thou hast done is for me. The mockery and shame heaped upon Thee have redounded to my honor. I give Thee ten thousand thanks for all Thou hast done for me. Thy death has reconciled me to God, and brought me peace, forgiveness of sins, righteousness and salvation. Because Thou livest, I shall live also. Be content therefore, my soul, and look with joy to heaven. Jesus has acquired heaven for thee, and prepared a mansion for thee there. And though I have here no abiding city, though my earthly life ends, my heart ceases to beat, and soul and body part asunder; I know that I shall go to Jesus my Saviour. For I know that if this earthly house of my tabernacle be dissolved, I have a building of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, — a building which Jesus has acquired for me by His sufferings and death.

3.

“Since Thou hast risen from the dead,”

Since Jesus has risen, God’s word assures me that I also, though I die, shall rise again. Although my body shall be laid in the earth and

turn to dust and ashes, it shall not remain in the grave, but shall be raised in glory. It shall shine like the sun in the Kingdom of the Father; it shall be transformed and glorified, and clothed with white robes. Is not this a great consolation for me? And this is so, because Jesus has risen from the dead. He died for me on the cross as the spotless Lamb of God, and was buried; but on the third day He rose again from the dead. Christ is risen: I also shall rise. Jesus lives: I also shall live. O joy, O bliss! Though my body die and be laid in the earth, it shall come forth again clothed with glory and immortality. As Jesus remained not in the grave, neither shall I.

"The grave shall not retain me,"

Jesus will restore my life to me, and give me back the members of my body. Soul and body, though separated by death, shall be re-united in the glorious resurrection. Therefore, let my body be laid in the grave; it shall not remain there. The grave is but the bed in which I sleep till Jesus wakes me. In it I repose after the weary hours of waking, suffering, pain, and turmoil. In my grave Jesus will cover me with the wings of His grace, and guard my bones till He joins them together again, and restores my head

and hands and all my members. As little as the grave could retain my Jesus, so little can it retain me when the last trumpet shall sound to wake the dead. The grave will not harm me. My body shall simply rest there from all care and toil and pain, while my soul is refreshed and comforted by God in heaven.

“Since Thou, Lord, didst ascend on high,”

When Jesus had arisen from the dead, He ascended into heaven and entered upon His glory. Behold, Jesus has gone on before, and I shall follow Him. I also shall ascend to heaven. My soul shall at once ascend to God after it quits this life; and in the blessed resurrection of the dead we shall be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and then soul and body shall be ever with the Lord. O my Jesus, let me meditate much upon this glorious ascension, that I may comfort myself with the thought of it. Help me to bear in mind, that I cannot ascend to heaven until after I have laid aside my mortality. This, then, shall be my greatest comfort in death: Jesus lives, and I shall also live; Jesus ascended to heaven, and I shall follow Him; Jesus has entered into glory, and I shall enter heaven and partake of that glory also. What can be sweeter and more delightful

than this ascension of Jesus and my own ascension?

"Death's fear shall not enchain me."

I know that I shall die; but I am not afraid of death, because it is the door through which my soul shall enter into eternal glory. Does a child fear to go to its father, or a bride to her bridegroom? Through death I shall come to my heavenly Father, and to Jesus the Bridegroom of my soul! Why then should I fear? I shall enter into glory, dwell in eternal light and joy, and receive a white robe and a crown. And this fills me, not with fear, but with gladness. I shall not die; only my wretchedness shall die. My soul shall lose its cross, and receive instead the blessedness of heaven; it shall take leave of men, and enter the company of the angels and the elect. Yes, my Lord Jesus, what still more dispels my fear of death is my holy fellowship with Thee;

"For where Thou art, there I shall be,"

O what a comfort this is: after death I shall ascend to heaven and be with my Jesus in glory. The sheep shall be with the Shepherd, the disciple with the Master, the servant with the Lord. This is what He has promised, saying, "Where I am, there also shall my servant be." O what

joy to have Jesus embrace me in His arms, and lead me to glory. O my Saviour, when shall the hour of this blessed consummation appear? Not only hast Thou rescued me from condemnation and the jaws of hell; not only hast Thou acquired salvation for my soul; not only hast Thou preceded me to prepare a place for me; but Thou wilt receive me unto Thyself, according as Thou hast promised to Thy children: "I will receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." Since I shall be where Jesus is, I am blessed.

"That I may ever live with Thee :"

Christ will take me unto Himself, in order that I may ever live with him in bliss, and enjoy the glory of heaven. I shall inherit a place in my heavenly Father's home, and share in all the joys of heaven. My pilgrimage will be at an end, and I shall be at home. And this union shall never be broken. I shall stand before His throne and see His face, and be filled by this vision with inexpressible joy. I shall live in His presence and be refreshed by Him throughout eternity.

"This is my joy in dying."

Why should I not die joyfully? In peace and happiness I pass away in accordance with the

will of God. My heart is content and death is but a sleep. I die joyfully, because my sins are forgiven for the sake of the sufferings and death of Jesus. I die joyfully, because I shall be raised from the grave to eternal life. I die joyfully, because I shall celebrate a joyful ascension, and come to my Jesus. I rejoice to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. I leave the world gladly, because I am going out of the world into heaven, away from this vale of tears to enter the abode of bliss. I am going from the tribulations and afflictions of this world to enter upon the enjoyment of those good things which Christ has prepared for me and which pass all human understanding, but which shall endure forever.

"And so to Jesus Christ I'll go,"

My Saviour said: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and to my God and your God." And I, as I die, say also: I ascend to my heavenly Father, to my Jesus, to the Holy Spirit — to the Triune God, to my Immanuel, to the Friend of my soul, to my Brother; yea, to my Redeemer I, a redeemed soul, ascend. I go to my Saviour, who will lead me into heaven, and receive me into favor as a soul that is cleansed by His blood. O how I long to behold Jesus in

His glory, and to embrace Him whom, not having seen, I yet love!

"My loving arms extending;"

I reach out my arms toward Jesus to press Him to my heart, to hold Him fast, and never more to let Him go. I already embrace Him by faith, and cling to Him. And I will not let Him go till He leads me into His Father's house to everlasting salvation. I extend my arms and cry: Yes, come Lord Jesus. I remember now how my Jesus extended His two arms upon the cross and died in that position, as though He would embrace me. So will I die now with arms outstretched to embrace Jesus. O Bridegroom of my soul, embrace me, and present me transformed and glorified before Thy heavenly Father. O what a happy entrance that will be, when thus, accompanied and conducted by Jesus, I shall enter into heaven. These shall be my thoughts in death.

"So fall asleep in slumber deep,"

Resting in the arms of Jesus I shall sleep in peace. With Jesus in my heart and mind, I fall asleep in God's name. O Jesus, cause my death to be a sweet and gentle slumber, and let me depart in faith and love toward Thee. Let my body repose peacefully in the cool earth till the

last day. And while the body thus sleeps, the soul shall be at rest in everlasting joy and bliss. O blessed sleep, which none shall disturb! I shall have rest from my cross, rest from all trouble and sorrow and grief, rest from all pain. O blessed, glorious heavenly rest! Since the child sleeps peacefully in its mother's arms, why should I not sleep and rest peacefully in the arms of Jesus?

"No man my slumber ending."

To wake the dead is a work of God, and no man has the power to wake them. But Thou, Lord Jesus, art true God, and wilt raise the dead from their graves; Thy voice shall resound through the depth of the earth and be heard in the graves; and the dead shall arise. O Jesus, raise my body on the last day to everlasting life, that the body also which has served Thee here may be glorified. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold Him and not another. What no man can do, this my Saviour shall do.

"But Jesus Christ, God's only Son,"

In these words I once more make confession of my faith in Jesus. He is Jesus, the Redeemer and Saviour of men; He is Christ, the Anointed One whom God had promised; He is not only true man, but the Son of God, yea, He is God. Trusting in this Jesus, I now die joyful and blessed. The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth me from all sin. He

"Shall ope the gates of bliss, lead on"

O my Jesus, when the door of this life closes after me, do Thou open to me the door of eternal life. I have diligently directed my thoughts to heaven here in this life; I have sought for heaven by a life of faith; therefore, O Jesus, open wide for me the gate of heaven when I close my earthly pilgrimage. O Jesus, open the door of heaven and say, "Thou good and faithful soul, enter thou into the joy of Thy Lord. Come, thou blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world." O how happy I shall be when Thou welcomest me with such words, and dost "lead on

To heaven, to life eternal."

As a bridegroom leads his bride to the marriage, so lead me, O Jesus, to eternal life, to the

life that shall never end, to the glory which Thou hast acquired for me, to the bliss that shall last forever. Thus I die happy. I am with Jesus, and He is with me. I am transported from the earthly life of sorrow to the heavenly life of joy. I am come from faith to sight. I shall, I know, see God face to face amid the everlasting joy and glory which awaits me. To Thee be praise and glory to all eternity.

THE BY-STANDERS ENCOURAGE THE DYING ONE.

Remember Jesus Christ, remember His bitter sufferings and death. Comfort yourself with the love of your heavenly Father, who has received you in Holy Baptism as His child, and will now receive you into everlasting glory. Comfort yourself with the bleeding wounds of Jesus, which he endured for your sins. Comfort yourself with His precious blood, which was shed for you. Comfort yourself with the grace of the Holy Spirit who has sanctified you. In this Triune God live and die blessed. Amen.

BENEDICTION OVER A DYING PERSON.

Depart in peace, O soul, ransomed with the precious blood of Jesus. Depart to thy dear God

and Father in Jesus Christ, who has created thee and loved thee, whom thou didst fear with child-like fear, and in whom thou didst trust. Depart to the Lord Jesus, thy loving and faithful Shepherd, who has purchased thee as his sheep with His own blood, and to whom thou hast clung in faith. Depart to the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, who has sanctified thee, and chosen thee for His temple and dwelling-place. Depart out of vanity into eternity. Rest from thy pilgrimage, and enter thy heavenly Fatherland. Depart out of sorrow into joy. Depart out of all trouble to the living God. God bless thy going out and thy coming in, and preserve thee by His power unto salvation. Depart, and enter upon the kingdom prepared for thee from the foundation of the world. The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE BY-STANDERS AFTER ONE HAS DIED.

O holy and righteous God! It hath pleased Thee to call the departed one away from this world by bodily death. O let us learn from this death, that we also must die and leave the world; so that we may prepare ourselves in time by re-

penitance, living faith, and the avoidance of the vanities and sins of the world. Gladden the departed soul with heavenly peace and joy, and fulfil unto it all the gracious promises which Thou hast given to the believers in Thy holy Word. Grant to the body a soft repose in the earth till the last day, when Thou shalt re-unite soul and body and lead them to glory, thus filling with heavenly bliss the whole man who has served Thee here on earth. Comfort those whom this death has filled with grief; and be and remain to the bereaved ones their Father, Provider, Guardian, Helper and Friend. Do not forsake them, do not fail them; but let them abundantly experience Thy goodness, grace, love, and help, till at last Thou shalt grant them also a peaceful and happy end. O, hear us for Thy mercy's sake. Amen.

BOOK V.

PRAYERS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAISES GOD ON HIS BIRTHDAY.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 116: 12. What shall I render unto the Lord
for all His benefits toward me?

BIRTHDAYS should be observed as days of praise and thanksgiving, and be employed in singing and prayer, and devotional thoughts and exercises. We should be moved to spend the day thus by a consideration of the many benefits which we have received from the faithful hand of God through all our life to the present moment, and by the fact that He has carried us in His arms in childhood, in youth, and even to the present hour. But only a very small percentage of people think of these things. The poor and lowly do not pay much attention to the day. At court the day is remembered and celebrated, but how? With expensive feasts, and balls; and then it certainly cannot be called a day of thanksgiving and praise, nor one that is well-pleasing to God.

True children of God, when they live to celebrate the anniversary of their birth, should praise the mercy and faithfulness of God (1) because He has let them be born of Christian parents, who brought them to a knowledge of the salvation in Jesus Christ; (2) because He has given them a sound body and a sound mind, for these are great, though often unacknowledged benefits of God; (3) because He has guarded them against harm, delivered them out of dangers, and preserved them up to the present moment. (4) At the same time they should humbly pray God to forgive them their sins, and promise Him to spend their remaining days in child-like obedience and faithfulness. (5) They should rest assured, that if they persevere in faith and love, God will continue to spread the wings of His grace over them. (6) Finally they should remember that this anniversary of their birth may possibly be the last one which they shall be permitted to celebrate on earth.

PRAYER.

Eternal, kind, and merciful God! By Thy grace I have lived to celebrate another birthday. And I thank Thee, not only that Thou hast given me the bodily birth, but also that Thou hast given me the new birth in Holy Baptism. By the one I became a human being and Thy

creature, and by the other I became Thy child and heir. Therefore this day shall be my day of praise, prayer, and thanksgiving. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Have I not reason to praise and thank Thee, my God? Thou hast not only blessed me with a sound body and straight limbs, but hast let me be born of Christian parents, who from my youth up trained me in the knowledge of Thee. If Thou hadst let me be born of Jewish, Moham-medan, or heathen parents, I would probably be as blind and obstinate as they. But now I know Thee and love Thee, and have in Thee the life and salvation of my soul. And as I have been brought up in Thine arms, so Thou hast led and guided me, and provided for me during all the following years, graciously preserving me to this day.

O my God, I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth, which Thou hast shown to me. Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my body and my soul. But O, I cannot declare it all. It would be easier to count the stars in the sky than to count the benefits which I

have received from Thee. From how many dangers hast Thou not delivered me! How much harm hast Thou not warded off from me! Thy Spirit has instructed, ruled, and guided me, and, when I was inclined to sin, has warned and restrained me.

And now, as my years increase and Thy benefits become more numerous, I think of the sins which I have committed in my life-time. O forgive me for Jesus' sake; blot out my sins with His precious blood; and let me for His sake find favor in Thy sight. Grant me grace to spend the remaining days which Thou hast allotted to me, in Thy fear and in holiness of life, so that all my actions may be well-pleasing to Thee. And since I do not know how many more days I shall spend upon the earth, and yet know, on the other hand, that Thou hast set bounds to my life which I cannot pass, guard me against shortening my life by anger, intemperance, sin, fool-hardiness or crime. Let me spend my allotted days in health, under Thy blessing and protection, till for Christ's sake Thou shalt give me, instead of this earthly and transient life, eternal life in heaven. Till then I will celebrate this anniversary, whenever it returns, to Thy honor and praise and glory. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise.

Ten thousand, thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ;
Nor is the least a cheerful heart
That tastes those gifts with joy.

Through every period of my life
Thy goodness I'll pursue;
And after death, in distant worlds,
The glorious theme renew.

When nature fails, and day and night
Divide Thy works no more,
My ever grateful heart, O Lord,
Thy mercy shall adore.

Through all eternity to Thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
But oh! eternity's too short
To utter all Thy praise.

— *Joseph Addison, 1712.*

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD AFTER
THE HARVEST HAS BEEN GATH-
ERED.

MEDITATION.

Hosea 2: 8, 9. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.

IF there be a striking manifestation of God's goodness which is apparent to all men, it is undoubtedly the annual harvest, when God, after having guarded the seed throughout the winter in the earth, having let it bloom and grow and bear fruit in the summer, and having warded off hail and damage by storm, fills barn and cellar with His blessings. But if there be a benefit of which the world makes light and for which it is least thankful to God, it is this very harvest. For ungrateful men imagine that it must be so; that according to the course of nature things must grow, and that God has nothing to do with it. For this reason God in just anger sometimes makes the harvest a failure, in order that all men may see that the ground cannot produce if He does not make it do so, and that nothing can grow without His blessing.

A Christian views the matter differently. When he beholds the full ears of grain, and the vines heavily laden with grapes, (1) he lifts his eyes to heaven, and praises the almighty Creator, Giver, and Preserver of these blessings, who from one grain has produced so many grains, and from an insignificant vine has brought forth such precious fruit. (2) He praises God's Providence, which has sent the early and the latter rains in their seasons, warded off hurtful thunder-storms, drought, hail, and floods, and preserved the harvest. And when he now sees the grain harvested and hauled into the barn, and the grapes crushed in the wine-press, (3) he receives all these gifts with grateful heart and hands. (4) He uses them and enjoys them with thanksgiving. He acknowledges that God nourishes, sustains, and preserves him. (5) He lets the goodness of God lead him to repentance. If men are thankful to their fellow-men for the gift of clothing or food, and avoid offending their benefactors, why should not we give thanks to our greatest Benefactor, who gives us all things?

PRAYER.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: and His mercy endureth for ever. Thus I say, O my God, now that I have seen another blessed

harvest gathered. O gracious God, how great is Thy mercy to us! Thou hast laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed forever. And in this earth Thou hast laid Thy glorious treasures, and makest it bring forth the fruits which nourish and sustain us. Thou hast crowned this year abundantly with Thy goodness; and Thy paths drop fatness. Thou hast watered the hills from Thy chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. Thou hast caused the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that Thou mightest bring forth food out of the earth.

O faithful Father! Thou hast this year again bestowed upon us, Thy unthankful children, food and drink; Thou hast preserved the harvest. Heaven has heard the cry of the earth; and the earth has brought forth corn and wine. Thou hast given us the early and the latter rains in their seasons. And now our fields have bloomed and offered us the bounty with which Thy blessing covered them. Our trees have brought forth all manner of beautiful fruit, and the vine has made us glad. Loving God and Father, Thou hast spread the wings of Thy mercy over all the land: Thou hast let the sunshine ripen the crops, and hast protected them from hail and blight and drought and flood. When we slept, Thou didst wake; Thou wast Guardian

and Keeper over our fields. O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all: the earth is full of Thy riches. All creatures, men and beasts, wait upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them, they gather; Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good.

Yes, abundantly indeed hast Thou, O God, blessed us this year with Thy gifts. And now we thank Thee from our inmost soul. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Let us enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Let us say with grateful heart: The Lord hath done great things for us; yea, the Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad. O Lord, Lord, grant us grace not to misuse these gifts and benefits which Thou hast bestowed, but to learn from them to appreciate Thy love and faithfulness toward us. And if, O God, some unthankful souls should abuse Thy gifts by gluttony or intoxication, do not on that account withdraw Thy blessing from us, but preserve it unto us according to Thy mercy.

O Father, who hast loved us with an everlasting love, and who through these bodily blessings also hast drawn us with loving-kindness, desiring that in the gifts we may recognize the Giver, and in the benefits the Benefactor; grant, that

Thy goodness may lead us to repentance, and that, whenever we see Thy gifts before us on the table or take them into our hands or mouth, we may lift up our eyes to Thee, the Fountain of all blessings. And as by these gifts Thou dost sustain our body, so let us be nourished and strengthened in the inward man, and increase in faith and love and holiness through the means of grace which Thou hast ordained; that we may grow in all goodness, and be changed from glory to glory, till at last we shall be admitted to the enjoyment of the heavenly blessings of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M. 6 lines.

Lord of the harvest! once again
We thank Thee for the ripened grain;
For crops safe carried, sent to cheer
Thy servants through another year;
For all sweet, holy thoughts supplied
By seed-time and by harvest-time.

The bare dead grain in autumn sown,
Its robe of vernal green puts on;
Glad from its wintry grave it springs,
Fresh garnished by the King of kings.
So, Lord, to those who sleep in Thee
Shall new and glorious bodies be.

Nor vainly of Thy Word we ask
A lesson from the reaper's task:

So shall Thine angels issue forth;
The tares be burnt; the just of earth,
Playthings of sun and storm no more,
Be gathered to their Father's store.

Daily, O Lord, our prayers be said,
As Thou hast taught, for daily bread;
But not alone our bodies feed;
Supply our fainting spirits' need!
O Bread of Life! from day to day
Be Thou their Comfort, Food, and Stay.

—*Joseph Anstice, 1836.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS DURING A THUNDER-STORM.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 18: 11-13. He made darkness His secret place; and His pavilion round about Him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before Him His thick clouds passed, hail-stones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave His voice; hail-stones and coals of fire.

AMONG the external things by which the ungodly and worldly are often frightened and induced to pray, are thunder-storms. For when God sends a heavy storm with lightning and thunder, many wanton lips begin to pray, not out of love to God,— else why did they not do so before? — but out of fear of punishment.

Believers recognize indeed, (1) that thunder and lightning are produced by natural causes, but also (2) that they carry out the commands of God. Just as God can arm all creatures against wicked men, so it is easy for Him to strike man or beast, or to set fire to houses, villages, and cities by lightning. (3) Hence pious Christians should not employ the words thunder and lightning to curse with, nor should they, on the other hand, (4) when a storm arises, become timid and fearful, and filled with terror; for this manifests a lack of trust in God. But they should (5) remember that God holds the thunder and lightning in His hands, and is abundantly able to protect them, even if they are out in the field and under the open sky.

But they should (6) all the more earnestly turn to God in prayer, recognize their own insignificance and the majesty of God, and realize that God is a mighty God, while we men are but poor worms, and dust and ashes, whom God with one nod or stroke could destroy. And therefore they should (7) bow in reverence and fear before the majesty of God, not only when it thunders, but also when the sun is shining, and should be careful not to offend Him by words or deeds, but to live in such a manner as to have the assurance of His favor at all times, even

though He should be pleased to take us away from this world in a thunder-storm.

PRAYER.

O Thou strong, Thou almighty God! I hear Thy voice in the clouds, I see Thy lightnings flash, and hear Thy thunders roar and roll. Mighty is Thy arm, and great is Thy power! and if Thou desiredst it, Thou couldst in one moment strike me and all men and all Thy creatures to the earth. But O Lord, Lord, remember Thy tender mercies and Thy loving-kindnesses; for they have been ever of old. Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to Thy mercy remember Thou me for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord. O rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure. I acknowledge in all humility of heart, that I have richly deserved that Thou in Thy righteous wrath shouldst strike and destroy me. But O, Thou long-suffering God, spare me in this storm. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

I lament and am heartily sorry that hitherto I have so often offended Thee by thoughts and words and deeds. And I pray Thee for mercy

and the forgiveness of all my sins and transgressions. Consider, O heavenly Father, that I am Thy creature and Thy child. And whither shall children go in their need and anxiety but to their father? Therefore I come to Thee, my Father, and pray Thee, be merciful to me, Thy child. O Father, protect me, shield me, preserve me. Under the shadow of Thy wings I seek refuge; hide me in Thy pavilion, place an angel guard around me, that no harm may touch me, no bolt strike me.

O Lord Jesus, Thou Son of God, my only Mediator, Intercessor, and Saviour, be not far from me; for trouble is near. Make haste to help me; be my strong Defense; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation. Behold, all help from creatures and men is vain; but O, do not Thou forsake me. Have mercy upon me and deliver me. I cling to Thee, O Jesus, I hide in Thy holy wounds, I cry out with the disciples, Lord, save us, we perish.

O blessed Holy Spirit, stir up my heart to prayer and true devotion, that I may be awakened and made better by this storm. Grant that henceforth I may pay heed when Thou knockest at my heart through Thy holy Word, and callest on me to repent, to be converted, and to shun all manner of sin. Let me gladly hear Thy voice,

and not be conformed to this world by sinful conversation and conduct.

O Holy Trinity, have mercy upon me and upon all pious Christians. Shield my body and life, my house and home with Thy almighty hand; preserve the fruits in the field; let not lightning set fire to my house, nor its bolt strike me. Be Thou my Stay in trouble; for vain is the help of man. O mighty Defender of Thy children, look in mercy upon me, and let me dwell in safety beneath Thy defense and protection. When Thy thunder rolls, the mountains shake and the earth trembles; is it any wonder then, that I poor worm tremble before Thee? Let me recognize the transient character of the world, and remember that all visible things shall be destroyed with fire; so that I may not offend Thee by yielding to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

O Lord, preserve me from sudden and evil death; let this storm pass by harmless. O God, who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders, and yet so merciful and gracious? O spare me, and let me once more find grace and deliverance. Lord God, the Father in heaven, have mercy upon us. Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon us. Lord God the Holy Ghost, have mercy

upon us. Be gracious unto us; spare us, good Lord. Be gracious unto us; help us, good Lord. From all calamity by fire and water, good Lord, deliver us. From sudden and evil death, good Lord, deliver us. Amen.

HYMN.

S. M. D.

Give to the wind thy fears,
 Hope and be undismayed;
 God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
 God shall lift up thy head.
 Through waves and clouds and storms
 He gently clears thy way:
 Wait thou His time, so shall this night
 Soon end in glorious day.

Still heavy is thy heart?
 Still sinks thy spirit down?
 Cast off the weight, let fear depart,
 And every care be gone.
 What though thou rulest not,
 Yet heaven and earth and hell
 Proclaim, God sitteth on the throne,
 And ruleth all things well.

Leave to His sovereign sway
 To choose and to command:
 So shalt thou wondering own, His way
 How wise, how strong His hand!
 Far, far above thy thought
 His counsel shall appear,
 When fully He the work hath wrought
 That caused thy needless fear.

Thou seest our weakness, Lord,
Our hearts are known to Thee:
O lift Thou up the sinking hand,
Confirm the feeble knee.
Let us in life, in death,
Thy steadfast truth declare,
And publish with our latest breath
Thy love and guardian care.

— *Paul Gerhardt, 1656.*
John Wesley, Tr. 1739.

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD AFTER THE THUNDER-STORM IS PAST.

MEDITATION.

Job 37: 5. God thundereth marvelously with His voice; great things doeth He, which we cannot understand.

AS all the works of the Lord are great, and calculated to fill the thoughtful observer with admiration and pleasure; so also is a thunder-storm, if we consider it properly. Though it is produced by natural causes, it is nevertheless under the control of God. God thundereth marvelously. He rules the clouds that are big with vapor and fire. He guides them according to His good pleasure. He employs them to carry out His designs; He lets them perform what is well-pleasing to Him.

His thunder is therefore always terrible. Although men can by means of science produce

electricity, they cannot approach even from afar the wonders which God brings to pass with thunder and lightning. The flash and the roar are terrible to behold and hear. Men tremble in dismay. The dumb cattle tremble and roar in affright. Every living creature is anxious and afraid. And what does God show by this means but His great power and majesty, by which He is able to set all things into commotion as soon as He causes His voice, rolling in the clouds, to be heard upon the earth? But God does still more by the storm. He doeth great things, which now bring damage, and again bring profit to men: damage, when the lightning destroys great trees, sets fire to houses, and strikes and kills men or beasts; profit, when by means of the mighty concussions he causes the hurtful vapors to rise from the earth, purifies the atmosphere, and increases the fruitfulness of the soil.

Does not God reveal that He is a great and glorious God, when in so incomprehensible a manner He doeth such marvelous things? Well may all men, because they so frequently see these things, be admonished by them to a living knowledge and humble adoration of God. Yet this is not always the result. God thundereth marvelously with His voice; but He is not always acknowledged. Most men are timid and despondent as long as they hear the uproar of the temp-

est; but as soon as the storm is past, all its effect upon them is past also. They forget it all, and act just as if they had not heard the voice of God, nor heard what great things He had done for them. If the storm has done damage, they show a momentary sympathy with those who met with the loss. But shortly after the storm is past, they forget all about it, and forget God Himself. O hard hearts, that will not permit themselves to be softened! O criminal insensibility! O shameful ingratitude!

Against such conduct true Christians are carefully on their guard. They see and observe the works of nature attentively, and let these works lead them to the Creator. This they do in particular when God thunders in the heavens. If they see a storm coming up, they admire the majesty, greatness, and glory of Him who brings it to pass. When they hear the thunder roll over their heads, and see the lightning flash around them, they quietly and trustfully commit themselves into the hands of the Lord, in whose care they always are; and in childlike confidence they await the best at His hands. When the storm has passed by harmless, they acknowledge what God has done for them, give thanks to Him, and praise His goodness and faithfulness with heart and lips and hands.

This leads them nearer to God, and brings them nothing but salvation and blessing. Of this God Himself assures them, when He says: "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me; and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I show the salvation of God."

PRAYER.

My soul fainteth for Thy salvation, O God of my salvation. Therefore I now draw near to Thy throne of grace and bring Thee my offering of praise and thanksgiving, because Thou hast so graciously delivered me out of trouble, terror, and danger. I trembled when I heard Thy mighty voice in the clouds, because I did not know what Thou wouldest do. I sought refuge in Thee by prayer, and committed myself and all that is mine to Thy Fatherly care. And Thou didst not cast me from Thee, but didst have compassion on me, and show that Thou dealest bountifully with me. How easily Thy lightnings might have set fire to our houses and forests! How easily the storm might have destroyed the fruits of the field! How easily our goods and possessions might have been utterly destroyed! How easily Thou mightest have made us as Admah, or dealt with us as with Zeboim! And all this Thou mightest have done justly, if Thou

hadst desired to deal with us according to our sins and reward us according to our iniquities.

But this Thou hast not done. Thou hast remembered us in love. Thou hast dealt with us in mercy. Thou hast withheld the punishment, and poured out benefits upon us. Thy loving-kindness has preserved us while we put our trust under the shadow of Thy wings, and enables us to dwell in safety once more. Thy goodness has kept us and Thy mercy has not failed us. This my soul perceives right well. Touched by this manifestation of Thy mercy, and filled with gratitude, I bow before Thee, and say: Thou Lord, hast done great things for me; whereof I am glad. Give unto the Lord glory and strength. Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Fear before Him, all the earth. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving: and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Bless the Lord, O my soul also, and forget not all His benefits.

I have seen, O great and almighty God, how Thou didst so graciously cause the heavy and terrible storm to pass by without doing harm. Let this manifestation of Thy goodness teach me to

trust in Thee and to hope in Thy mercy in all the troubles which may yet come upon me. I behold again an unclouded sky; O let me henceforth ever taste and see that Thou art good. I have seen new evidences of Thy greatness and glory; O let these encourage me to regard Thee with childlike fear, to love Thee fervently, to adore Thee humbly, and to live as is well-pleasing in Thy sight. I have experienced anew Thy guardian care; O let it continue over me and mine, and over all men.

If the storm which has passed over us has done damage and harm elsewhere, O have mercy upon those who have been injured. Give them grace to recognize that it was Thy hand which inflicted the blow, and to humble themselves under it. Do Thou comfort and strengthen them. Replace for them in some other way what they have lost. Let them soon hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. And grant me grace to make the right use of the gifts and possessions which Thou hast preserved to me, and which Thou hast, therefore, so to say, given to me anew. Let me receive my daily bread with thanksgiving. Let me manage my goods as a faithful steward. Grant that I may never misemploy them in dissipation or vanity, but use them at all times for Thy glory, to my own welfare, and the good

of my fellow-man; and thus be enabled to give a joyful account to Thee.

Watch over my possessions in the future also, and preserve them from harm. And though many a storm should yet come and threaten me with destruction, let me, undismayed, trust in Thy mercy, and confidently hope in Thy goodness. Let me then experience, that he who trusteth in Thee shall not be put to confusion. Yea, if it should be Thy will to afflict me at some time through a storm, and to make me poor; O then do Thou first make me to be rich in spirit, that if I should lose all else, I may yet retain Thee and Thy fellowship and heaven. If I have heaven, I have enough.

O my Father, O my Saviour, O my Comforter! Thou who dwellest in heaven, and who from thence didst vouchsafe to me, during the storm that has just passed, Thy protection and help; bring me also to Thyself into heaven, that I may see Thee face to face, and give Thee eternal thanks and praises. Teach me through Thy Word to walk in Thy ways, and to do whatever is well-pleasing to Thee. Lead me in the land of uprightness. Unite my heart to fear Thy name. Let me remain steadfast in faith, in love, and in hope, and not depart from the way of righteousness. Keep me faithful to the end, in

order that, when the Lord Jesus, on that great Day of Judgment, shall be manifest in flames of fire, in thunder and lightning, to measure out punishment upon those who have not known God nor obeyed His Gospel, I may not be dismayed, but may joyfully lift up my head, and enter into eternal life with Him. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

Thee we adore, eternal Lord,
We praise Thy name with one accord.
Thy saints, who here Thy goodness see,
Through all the world do worship Thee.

To Thee aloud all angels cry,
The heavens and all the powers on high :
Thee, holy, holy, holy King,
Lord God of Hosts, they ever sing.

The apostles join the glorious throng ;
The prophets swell the immortal song ;
Thy martyrs' noble army raise
Eternal anthems to Thy praise.

From day to day, O Lord, do we
Highly exalt and honor Thee !
Thy name we worship and adore,
World without end, for ever more.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, we humbly pray,
To keep us safe from sin this day ;
Have mercy, Lord, we trust in Thee ;
O, let us ne'er confounded be.

—*John Gambold, 1754.*

Thomas Cotterill, Tr. 1825. a.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS TO GOD WHEN STARTING UPON A JOURNEY.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 121: 58. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.

VARIOUS reasons may impel a Christian to travel away from home, such as the demands of his business or occupation, the love of his fellow-men, or the condition of his health. Journeys induced by vanity or luxury are unbecoming to a child of God. But if there be a good reason why the Christian should absent himself for a time from his home, he should (1) begin his journey with prayer, and remember that God will be with him wherever he may go in a strange country, and that He sees and hears all things. He should therefore conduct himself honorably, and in a chaste, pious, and Christian manner, as in God's presence.

At the beginning of his journey, he should (2) commit himself to God's protection and care, and pray God to bring him back again in health and unharmed. For many persons have lost their life, or their health, or have met with misfortune

upon a journey. (3) He should commit those whom he leaves behind, as well as his house and property, to God's care, and pray God to let His holy angels keep guard over them, and protect them from fire, flood, and every misfortune. (4) He should pray God to let him find his property unharmed and his dear ones well when he returns.

PRAYER.

Gracious and merciful God, I have resolved in Thy name to be absent for a while from my dear ones and my home; and therefore I come to Thee and pray: O, bless my going out and my coming in. In Thy name I would begin my journey. Do Thou accompany me on my way, and bring me, safely guarded, back to my home again. Let Thy angel host surround and protect me like Jacob; let Thy angel support me in every danger like Paul; let Thy angels journey with me as with Joseph and Mary and the Child Jesus, that I may remain safe from misfortune, from thieves and murderers, and from harm of every kind. O Thou Keeper of Israel, who dost not slumber nor sleep, be by day and by night a wall of fire around me, as around Elisha, that no misfortune or harm may approach me. Give me early and late, in forest and field, Thy holy angels to guard and conduct me, as Thou didst conduct the children of Israel through the wil-

derness by a pillar of cloud. Accompany me when I travel; remain with me when I rest; watch for me when I sleep. Yea, Lord, Lord, take care of me wherever I go, and let me enjoy Thy continual protection.

Grant, O God, that every day the words which Thou spakest to Abraham, when He set out on his journey, may resound in my ears: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect;" so that I may ever be mindful of Thy holy presence while I am in a strange land. Preserve me, that I may not during my absence from home lust after evil things. Keep me from intemperance, vanity, impudence, malice, worldliness, sin, and shame. Help me to return home with a clean conscience. Turn my eyes away when they would look upon evil; draw my thoughts aside when evil lusts would arise in my heart; and keep me from staining my body or my soul with sin. Help me to remember that Thou hearest all that I say, and seest all that I do; that wherever I go or stay, Thou goest and stayest also. And let this remembrance preserve me from sinning against Thee and incurring Thy wrath and displeasure.

I commend to Thy care all that I leave behind me. Protect my property from thieves, fire, and flood; and let me find it all safe and well-preserved on my return. Watch over all my dear ones whom I leave behind. O my God, I leave

them, but do Thou remain with them. Ward off from them all harm, misfortune, and sickness, and let me find them well on my return. Be their Protector: preserve them, guide them, and guard them. Let me not hear any sorrowful tidings concerning them; but let them live as in Thy sight, and enjoy Thy protection and favor. And at the proper time let me return home safe, and find my dear ones in health.

O Lord Jesus, who in the form of a traveler didst journey with Thy two disciples, be with me upon my journey also, and fill my heart with good thoughts. Give me pious companions, that we may not sin against Thee on the way by shameful and sinful conversation, but may think of Thee, and as in Thy presence speak of Thy goodness, of Thy wonderful works, of Thy faithfulness and truth. O my God, in Thy name I have undertaken my journey; in Thy name let me happily conclude it; and then, together with my dear ones, I will heartily praise and adore Thee all the days of my life. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O God of Jacob, by whose hand
Thy people still are fed;
Who, through this weary pilgrimage,
Hast all our fathers led!

To Thee our humble vows we raise,
To Thee address our prayer;
And in Thy kind and faithful breast
Deposit all our care.

Through each perplexing path of life
Our wandering footstep guide;
Give us by day our daily bread,
And raiment fit provide.

O spread Thy covering wings around,
Till all our wanderings cease,
And at our Father's loved abode
Our souls arrive in peace.

To Thee, as to our covenant God,
We'll our whole selves resign;
And thankful own, that all we are,
And all we have, is Thine.

—*Doddridge, 1755. a.*

PRAYER OF ONE WHO IS LIVING IN A
STRANGE LAND.

FAR from my friends and acquaintances, I
find myself in a strange land, where as
yet I know but very few people. But I
know Thee, O Jesus, Thou Son of the Highest,
as my Immanuel, my Brother, and my best
Friend. Therefore I now turn to Thee, and hum-
bly beseech Thee to have mercy upon me and

not forsake me till I return to my home, yea, till I come to Thee in Thy heavenly kingdom. Thou hast given to Thine own the comforting assurance: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Fulfil this promise in me, and let me always and everywhere feel Thy gracious presence.

Lord, Thou Thyself hast hallowed travel: for in Thy youth didst visit Jerusalem and other places, and during Thy public ministry didst journey to and fro in the Holy Land, doing good, and healing those who had fallen into the hands of Satan. O let me ever think of Thee, and, following Thy example, never do anything in a strange land but that which is honest and pure and of good report. After Thy resurrection Thou didst accompany Thy disciples on the way to Emmaus, and at their request didst abide with them. O abide with me, and leave me not. Remain my Companion, my Protector, my Support, my Counselor, my Guide, my Deliverance. O Lord Jesus, let me find in every event that Thou art near me. Guard me against the company of wicked persons; and if I should find myself in their company, strengthen me lest I share in their sins or permit them to lead me into evil. Give me grace to resist all enticements and temptations, and to preserve a clean conscience.

Raise up good and faithful friends in whom I may confide; and let me find profit and blessing in their society.

Lord, take my soul and body into Thy keeping. Grant that I may not only retain my health of body, but may preserve my soul unstained by sin and my conscience undefiled. Bestow upon me through Thy Holy Spirit the contentment of Moses, the chastity of Joseph, the godliness of Samuel, and the temperance of Daniel. Give me prudence, that I may act wisely in all things. Incline my will to virtue, and let me exercise myself in it; that here in this strange land I may acquire and retain a good name, and return home with the testimony of a good conscience and the assurance of Thy favor. Tame my passions, lest they involve me in strife and contention; and let me keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Especially do Thou strengthen me, O my Saviour, to confess and glorify Thee before the world with heart and mouth. And should I be assailed on account of my faith, grant me grace to be ready always to give unto every one that asketh me a reason of the hope that is in me with meekness and fear, and not to permit myself in any way to fall away from Thee, to deny Thy doctrine, or to be unfaithful. Let Thy Word

ever be a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. Then shall I always walk blamelessly and be able to stand before Thee.

Keep me also, O merciful God, alive and well; and let me hear only good news from those whom I left at home. Bless me in the business which has brought me to this place, and crown all my undertakings with success. And when I shall have accomplished the purpose for which I came, bring me back again joyful and happy to my dear ones. Then will I pay my vows to Thee, and without ceasing praise and magnify Thee for all the love and faithfulness which Thou hast shown unto me. Let me remember, however, after I have arrived at home, that I am a stranger and a sojourner on earth: in order that I may spend the days of my pilgrimage in such a manner as to reach at last my true and heavenly fatherland, and there dwell in Thy fellowship forever. Amen.

HYMN.

8, 7, 4, 7.

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,
 Pilgrim through this barren land;
 I am weak, but Thou art mighty,
 Hold me with Thy powerful hand;
 Bread of heaven,
 Feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
 Whence the healing streams do flow;

Let the fiery, cloudy pillar,
Lead me all my journey through :
Strong Deliverer,
Be Thou still my Strength and Shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
Bid my anxious fears subside :
Death of death and hell's Destruction,
Land me safe on Canaan's side :
Songs of praises
I will ever give to Thee.

— *Peter Williams. 1772.*

PRAYER OF ONE WHO IS SICK AMONG
STRANGERS.

HOW mysterious are Thy ways, O infinite
God! how incomprehensible are Thy
dealings with us! Thus I must say, O
Lord, as I pray to Thee on this bed of sickness.
When I went away from home I was well and
strong, and now I am sick and wretched. On
the road, and till I arrived here, I was sound and
strong in body; but now I lie here weak and
powerless. How easily things may change in a
single day!

O my God, let this sickness redound to my
good. Let me learn from it how vain and tran-
sient are human life, fortune, and prosperity
here on earth; so that I may never place my de-

pendence nor set my heart on them, but may strive above all to attain those things which are eternal and imperishable. Teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom. Let me realize, that verily man at his best state is altogether vanity. I must, indeed, acknowledge and confess that my hardest trial lies in my separation from my dear ones, and the loss of their society and encouragement, and in the uncertainty whether I shall ever see them again. Yet I do not on this account grow despondent, but hope in Thee, O Father, who art with me here in this strange land, who carest for me, and who assuredly wilt not forget to watch over me. I therefore yield myself confidently to Thee, and say: Do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight.

Above all things, have pity on my soul, and let it not perish. Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned. Heal Thou me and I shall be healed. Save Thou me, and I shall be saved. Mercifully pardon all the sins by which I have ever offended or grieved Thee. Forgive me for the sake of Thy dear Son, my Saviour, Jesus Christ. Strengthen my faith in Him, and let me ever in His name pray to Thee and seek the help which I need. Let Thy Holy Spirit work mightily in my heart, and make me to be here in time what Thou wouldest have me be there in eternity. Let the

Holy Spirit bear witness with my spirit that I am a child of grace and an heir of eternal life.

Give me the needful patience, that I may not murmur nor rebel against Thee, but may quietly accept and bear whatever Thou layest upon me. Thou, O Lord, givest power to the faint, and to them that have no might Thou increasest strength. Therefore deal with me according to Thy loving-kindness. If I should have much pain to endure, let me remember that it is still much less than I have deserved on account of my sins. If my sufferings should last long, grant me grace to be patient under them, and to wait for Thy hour of help and deliverance. And when that hour comes, let Thy grace gladden my heart.

Do with me, O Lord, as Thou wilt. Thy will is best. Write this conviction in my heart: Teach me to pray with my Saviour, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." If it be possible according to Thy will, let me grow well again: bless the medicine which I use, and let me gather strength day by day. Recompense those who have taken compassion on me, a stranger, and have faithfully cared for me; be Thou their shield and exceeding great Reward. But should it please Thee not to restore me to health, and to let me find a grave in a strange land, grant me grace to submit my will completely to Thy

good and gracious will. Let me remember that the whole earth is Thine, and that here, as well as at home, Thou wilt be able to find my decayed body, and raise it to life again.

Take my absent friends and relatives under Thy protection. Bless them in spiritual and bodily things. Let Thy Spirit lead and guide them in all their ways. And grant that we may all meet one another in a glad re-union above, and there together praise and glorify Thee. And now, Lord, I hope in Thee; I confidently believe that Thou wilt do all things well. In Thee alone, O God, do I put my trust. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to Thy will,
And make my pleasure Thine.

Why should I shrink at Thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears?
Or tremble at the gracious Hand
That wipes away my tears?

No! let me rather freely yield
What most I prize to Thee,
Who never hast a good withheld,
Nor wilt withhold from me.

Thy favor all my journey through
Thou art engaged to grant;

What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.

— *William Cowper, 1779.*

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD WHEN
HE HAS RETURNED SAFE
FROM A JOURNEY.

PRAYER.

LORD, Lord God, merciful and gracious,
longsuffering, and abundant in goodness
and truth, who art able to do abundantly
above all that we ask or think, and who art rich
in mercy toward those who hear Thee and walk
in Thy ways! Behold, I have by Thy grace hap-
pily finished the journey which I began in Thy
name. And now for the first time I come before
Thee again in my own home. I have vowed that
I would give Thee thanks; and now I would pay
my vow. O lift up my heart to Thee in fervent
devotion, and incline Thine ear to my cry, my
King and my God!

I cannot conceal the fact, that I went away
from home with my heart full of solicitude, and
that I was almost afraid when I thought of the
many dangers to which travelers are often ex-
posed. And how easily an accident might have
happened to me! How easily robbers and mur-
derers might have fallen upon me, and robbed

and murdered me! How easily I might have met with an accident and lost my straightness and soundness of limb! How easily sickness, pain, and death might have overtaken me, and prevented the accomplishment of my purpose! How easily my house and home, my goods and property might have been damaged or destroyed in my absence! But none of these things has happened. None of these misfortunes has befallen me. And this is due alone to Thy mighty protection, Thy Fatherly care, Thy gracious help, and Thy faithful guidance. To Thee alone also be praise, honor, and glory.

Thou didst not only graciously shield me upon my journey against misfortune and accident, but didst bestow many benefits upon me while I traveled. Thou didst preserve my health; Thou gavest me faithful companions; Thou didst raise up for me everywhere good friends; Thou didst bless my business; Thou didst guard my property and preserve it unharmed till my return; Thou didst keep my dear ones, and permit me to rejoin them in joy and gladness. O how great is Thy mercy! How manifold are Thy benefits! How immeasurable are the riches of Thy grace and love! What shall I, and what can I render to Thee for all Thy benefits to me?

O, I cannot repay Thee; I am too weak and powerless. But I thank Thee with heart and

voice and hands for Thy goodness. Ten thousand thanks I give to Thee, O Lord, for all Thy grace to me. Let my poor, weak sacrifice of praise be acceptable to Thee for the sake of the perfect atoning sacrifice of Jesus. O Lord, graciously accept the feeble praise which I offer Thee here on earth: in heaven I will give Thee nobler praise, and in the company of the holy angels I will sing a thousand thousand alleluias to Thy name.

And now that I am once more in the midst of my family, let me, O Lord, together with them, continue to enjoy Thy favor and blessing. Help me frequently to declare to them what great things Thou didst for me upon my journey, that they also may be encouraged to admire Thy faithfulness and love, and to trust in Thee with child-like confidence. Let me live with them in quietness and peace and true contentment as long as I shall remain here with them, and always make it my chief concern that we should serve Thee in holiness and righteousness. Let me employ properly the blessings secured through my journey, regarding and using them always with thankful heart. And let me look upon all my coming days as a journey to eternity, and spend them in the grace of Thy holy Spirit, in the fear of God, in holiness, and in Thy

service. Give me grace to continue undiscouraged on my pilgrimage to my heavenly fatherland, and successfully to overcome everything that would bar my progress.

And when, at last, I shall have finished my course, receive me into Thine eternal heavenly kingdom, and grant me the rest which Thou hast appointed and prepared for Thy people in the world to come. There I will praise and thank Thee as I ought. There I will extol Thy goodness and truth for evermore. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

My God, my King, Thy various praise
Shall fill the remnant of my days:
Thy grace employ my humble tongue,
Till death and glory raise the song.

The wings of every hour shall bear
Some thankful tribute to Thine ear;
And every setting sun shall see
New works of duty done for Thee.

But who can speak Thy wondrous deeds?
Thy greatness all our thoughts exceeds;
Vast and unsearchable Thy ways,
Vast and immortal be Thy praise.

— *Watts, 1719.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS IN TIME OF WAR.

MEDITATION.

Lament. 1: 20; 2: 4, 5, 21. Behold, O Lord; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled: mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death. He hath bent His bow like an enemy. He hath swallowed up all her palaces. The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword.

THE three plagues through which God, when He is angry, lays whole countries and cities waste and desolate are war, famine and pestilence (Jer. 34:17). War is a dreadful punishment; for when God removes His protection from a country, the enemy at once overruns it. The reasons why God punishes a country with war and desolation are various: (1) Disobedience (Isa. 1:19, 20). (2) Wickedness: when men live in the lusts of the flesh, and remove the fear of God from before their eyes, (Judg. 4:1; 6:1, 3). (3) Despising God's Word: when men either will not hear it at all, or will not live according to it, (Lev. 26:17). (4) Idolatry (Judg. 2:12-14): and this idolatry may be gross or subtle. In the latter case it includes voluptuousness, adultery, murder, shedding innocent blood, oppression of strangers and widows, and robbery of the poor.

When God thus calls on the sword to punish men (Jer. 15:6), He also turns the edge of their sword (Ps. 89:43), so that even with a large army they cannot stand in the battle, but must flee before their foes (Ps. 44:10); and their land is plundered, oppressed, and filled with misery and wretchedness.

PRAYER.

O justly offended God! We come with anxious heart and bended knees into Thy all-holy presence, and lament the great wretchedness to which our great sins and Thy just anger have brought us. Lord, Lord, we lived in safety beneath Thy protection, and no sword dared threaten us as long as Thou wast an enemy unto our enemies and an adversary unto our adversaries. We passed peacefully in and out of our gates, and enjoyed the fruits of our land undisturbed. But now, O great God, Thou hast removed Thy protection, and hast taken away our peace from us. The foe has come, and drawn the sword, and threatens to burn and plunder and destroy our cities, and take possession of our land.

And what shall we say in our distress? We must confess that we have long ago deserved punishment and chastisement. We have, alas, abused the good days of peace. When we should

have been built up in Thee, and walked in Thy fear, and served Thee, and been obedient to Thee, there was found among us, alas, the desecration of the Sabbath, the taking of Thy name in vain, unrighteousness, carnal security, malice, and the most dreadful vices. We are ashamed, O angry God, to recount all our abominations; for they cry out unto heaven. O merciful God, remember not our sins, which are countless as the sands on the seashore, but according to Thy mercy remember Thou us for Thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

We do not present our supplications before Thee for our righteousnesses, but for Thy great mercies. We have sinned, we have done evil, we have been wicked and reprobate, and have forsaken Thy commandments. O Lord, rebuke us not in Thine anger, neither chasten us in Thy hot displeasure. We flee to the throne of Thy grace, to Jesus Christ, our only Helper and Intercessor. O look upon His blood and wounds. O God of mercy, have mercy upon us. If Thou wilt deal with us according to our sins and Thy justice, then shall the enemy destroy us, and devour and burn and subjugate our land; and none can save us. O mighty Defender of the needy, arise, and let not men gain the dominion. Thou canst give us strength for the battle, and cast down before us those who oppose us. In

Thee alone is our trust and hope in this time of great trouble. Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee.

O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme Thy name forever, as though none could deliver us out of his hand? Save us, O God of our Salvation, and forgive us our sins for Thy name's sake. Take away courage from the enemy, and drive him out from our country; and watch over our land and our houses and homes. Let peace speedily shine upon us again, and ward off the dangers which impend over us. Lord, Thou art He who breakest the bow, and cuttest the spear in sunder, and burnest the chariot in the fire. O loving God, hear the cry of those who are even now in danger and in the hands of the enemy, and must endure shame and cruelty. Have mercy upon the poor, the widows, the aged, and the children, who cannot flee. Bring the hurtful war to a speedy close, and hear our prayer for Thy love and mercy's sake. Amen.

HYMN.

8, 7.

Dread Jehovah, God of nations,
From Thy temple in the skies
Hear Thy people's supplications,
Now for their deliverance rise.

Lo, with deep contrition turning,
Humbly at Thy feet we bend;
Hear us, fasting, praying, mourning,
Hear us, spare us, and defend.

Though our sins, our hearts confounding,
Long and loud for vengeance call,
Thou hast mercy more abounding;
Jesus' blood can cleanse them all.

Let that Love veil our transgression,
Let that Blood our guilt efface:
Save Thy people from oppression,
Save from spoil Thy holy place.

—Rev. C—— E——, 1804.

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD FOR THE RESTORATION OF PEACE.

MEDITATION.

Psalm 46: 8-11. Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations He hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; He burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.

WHEN a bloody war has devastated a land, no gladder message can ring out than this: There is peace. The exiled return to their homes, the banished have hope of regaining their own, the land quickly recuper-

ates and blossoms in joy because it is no longer trampled under the foot of the foe.

The Christian recognizes that the gift of peace is from above, and therefore with heart and voice he (1) praises God, who has put an end to the destruction, the robbery, the plundering, the slaughter, the burning, and has freed the inhabitants of the land from the fear and dominion of the enemy. (2) He thanks God, that in the perilous days of war he and his were protected and not given as a spoil into the hands of the enemy. (3) He acknowledges that peace is glorious like the sun which gladdens everything, and like the dew which refreshes. (4) He prays God to make the peace permanent, and to restrain those who would disturb it. (5) He employs the days of peace, not for a life of voluptuousness and sinful pleasures, but for the purpose of increasing in true religion, and serving God undisturbed and unhindered.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord, gracious, and merciful, and abundant in goodness! In Thy just judgment upon us for abusing the good days of the former peace, Thou tookest away that peace from our land, and broughtest a bloody war upon us. Thou sentest our enemies upon us as a punishment. These drew the sword, slew, desolated the land, and filled us with fear and terror. But although

we deserved that this war should have destroyed us utterly, yet in Thy wrath Thou didst remember mercy, and didst put into the minds of the opposing rulers thoughts of peace. For this we give Thee heart-felt, joyful thanks. The heads of the opposing armies have agreed upon terms of peace. At Thy command the sword returns to its sheath, the exiles return, and once more we are able to go in and out of our gates without fear of danger. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates; He hath blessed thy children within Thee; He maketh peace in thy borders.

What a precious treasure is the peace over which the whole land now rejoices! To-day Thou renewest to us Thy promise: "Ye shall dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid; neither shall the sword go through your land." O Lord, grant that this peace may last as long as we live. Lift up Thy countenance upon us, and give us peace as a precious part of Thy divine blessing upon Thy people. Let our peace be like a river that never runs dry, but flows without ceasing. Let righteousness and peace always kiss each other, and righteousness look down from heaven.

Grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that we may not abuse this precious peace by luxury, intemperance, and carnal security, but seek our spiritual edification, and walk in the fear of the Lord. Bless and restore the desolated land; and let Thy thoughts toward us be always thoughts of peace. And at the end of our days, let us depart from this world in peace, and be received into the habitations of peace above. Amen.

HYMN.

(Herr Gott, wir danken dir.) 6, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6.

Lord God, we worship Thee!
 In loud and happy chorus
 We praise Thy love and power,
 Whose goodness reigneth o'er us.
 To heaven our song shall soar,
 Forever shall it be
 Resounding o'er and o'er,
 Lord God, we worship Thee.

Lord God, we worship Thee!
 For Thou our land defendest;
 Thou pourest down Thy grace,
 And strife and war Thou endest
 Since golden peace, O Lord,
 Thou grantest us to see,
 Our land with one accord,
 Lord God, gives thanks to Thee.

Lord God, we worship Thee!
 Thou didst indeed chastise us;

Yet still Thy anger spares,
And still Thy mercy tries us :
Once more our Father's hand
Doth bid our sorrows flee,
And peace rejoice our land :
Lord God, we worship Thee.

Lord God, we worship Thee!
And pray Thee, who hast blessed us,
That we may live in peace,
And none henceforth molest us :
O crown us with Thy love ;
Fulfil our cry to Thee :
O Father, grant our prayer :
Lord God, we worship Thee.

—*John Frank, 1653.*

Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1862.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS IN TIME OF FAMINE.

MEDITATION.

Ezek. 4: 16. Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment.

AS animals are disciplined by hunger in order to train them, so men are subdued by God through hunger when they will not otherwise be obedient to Him. He endeavors for a long time to attract them to Himself by His benefactions. But if they will not let

His goodness lead them to repentance, He sends famine into the land, either through failure of the harvest, or through war, or through the scarcity and high cost of food, or by depriving the bread of its nourishing properties, so that men eat and are not satisfied.

This punishment is sent generally: (1) When men make light of the Word of God, and are only concerned to live a life of pleasure (Isa. 5: 13). (2) When men persecute the godly (Jer. 11: 22). (3) When men eagerly listen to the voice of false prophets (Jer. 14: 15, 16), or (4) are obstinate (Jer. 24: 10), or (5) remain disobedient (Ezek. 4: 16), or (6) oppress the lowly (II Sam. 21: 1, 2). Famine carries in its train poverty, misery, and starvation, so that parents have been known, for very hunger, to eat their own children. (7) If to this famine is added the spiritual famine spoken of in Amos 8: 11, the famine is unspeakably great.

PRAYER.

O righteous God! who renderest to every man according to his deeds, and lettest wrath, tribulation, and anguish come upon those that do evil; we come into Thy holy presence, ashamed of having sinned against Thee so greatly that Thou art obliged to bring us to prayer and obedience through famine.

O how abundantly Thou didst feed us in the years that are gone! We had bread in great plenty; the earth bore the best and loveliest fruit. These gifts should have been bands of love to draw us to Thee, the Giver, and to lead us to repentance. But how shamefully these gifts have been abused by intemperance, luxury, and extravagance; yea, so shamefully abused that the creature itself sighed over the graceless manner in which it was received by unthankful men! Is it a wonder then, that a fertile land becomes barren on account of the sins of those who dwell therein? Thou punishest us with famine, dearth, and drought, and makest the earth bring forth sparingly, and the land to suffer from want. Lord, hear the cry of the poor who cry for bread and are not satisfied. Let the whining of the children, the lamentations of the parents, and the misery which dwells in every home in city and country, move Thee to pity. It seems as though Thou hast taken the blessing from our food; for we eat, and are not satisfied; we eat, and yet almost die of hunger. And the cattle, the dumb creatures, cry out to their Maker for food.

O Lord, Lord, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, have mercy upon us, and return to us again with the blessing which Thou hast taken away. Thy river is full

of water; therefore visit the earth and water it. Let heaven hear the cry of the earth, and do Thou Thyself hear us from Thy sanctuary. Let the famine cease, turn unto us again in mercy. Satisfy the hungry, gladden the poor, bless the little bread which we have, and which we daily eat by weight and with care. Now we realize that we cannot live by bread alone, but chiefly by the word of blessing which proceedeth out of Thy mouth, and by which Thou puttest strength into our food. Let the fields soon be covered again with grain; multiply our small supply of meal like that of the widow of Sarepta; let the small supply be sufficient to support many. And meanwhile let Thy Word ever be our food and nourishment; for it is our heart's rejoicing, and sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. And for Thy grace we will laud and praise Thee all our days. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

(Wenn wir in höchsten Nöthen sein.)

When in the hour of utmost need
We know not where to look for aid:
When days and nights of anxious thought
Nor help nor counsel yet have brought:

Then this our comfort is alone,
That we may meet before Thy throne,

And cry, O faithful God, to Thee
For rescue from our destiny:

To Thee may raise our hearts and eyes,
Repenting sore with bitter sighs,
And seek Thy pardon for our sin,
And respite from our griefs within.

For Thou hast promised graciously
To hear all those who cry to Thee,
Through Him whose name alone is great,
Our Saviour and our Advocate.

And thus we come, O God, to-day,
And all our griefs before Thee lay;
For tried, afflicted, lo, we stand,
With want and woe on every hand.

Ah, hide not for our sins Thy face;
Absolve us through Thy boundless grace;
Be with us in our anguish still,
Free us at last from every ill.

That so with all our hearts may we
Once more with joy give thanks to Thee,
And walk obedient to Thy Word,
And now and ever praise the Lord.

— *Paul Eber, 1560.*

Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1858. a.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS IN TIME OF PESTILENCE.

MEDITATION.

Deut. 28: 15, 21, 22. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes which I command you this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until He have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

IF, according to Rom. 2: 8, 9, wrath, tribulation, and anguish shall come upon those that do evil, there must be included in that anguish contagious diseases and pestilence. These come, to a large extent (1) When men do not believe the word of warning and admonition (Num. 14: 12). (2) When they serve God only outwardly and not from the heart (Jer. 14: 12), or (3) are wholly disobedient to God (Jer. 24: 10: 27: 9), or (4) despise the servants of God (Jer. 29: 17). (5) When the people become insolent and unruly (Ezek. 14: 10). (6) When adultery and murder run riot (Ezek. 33: 26, 27). (7) When no calls to repentance are any longer heeded (Amos 4: 10). (8) On account of adultery (Numb. 25:

9). (9) On account of blasphemy (II Kings 19: 35). 10) On account of pride (II Sam. 24: 15), and other sins also.

Where this punishment is inflicted, it is necessary for men to repent. For God in His mercy may be entreated. And for this reason David chose from among the three plagues that of the pestilence.

PRAYER.

Strong and almighty God! Great is Thy wrath against wilful transgressors, who will not let Thy goodness lead them to repentance. For a time Thou dealest with the children of men like a loving Father, seeking by Thy long-suffering to draw them to Thyself. But when they wantonly abuse Thy grace, Thou manifestest Thyself as a stern Judge.

This we also now experience, O righteous God. We are informed that in many places a contagious disease is raging and carrying off many thousands of people, so that the dead are found in nearly every house, and hands are lacking to bury them. We are consumed by Thine anger, and by Thy wrath are we troubled. Have we not reason to fear that Thou mayest bring the disease into our midst also? Thou jealous God, we dare by no means imagine that those whom Thou hast made to feel the severity of Thy rod are sinners above

others, but must rather confess that we all deserve to perish even as they. Among us also may be found carnal security, contempt of Thy Word, contumacy, luxury, fornication, unrighteousness, sinful pleasures, pride; yea, there is scarcely any fear of God in the land. The godly man ceaseth, and the faithful fail from among the children of men. If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Thou desirest not the death of the sinner, but that the sinner turn from his way and live. Therefore we abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. Have mercy upon us according to Thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out our transgressions. We have followed the sins of our fathers, we have not dealt righteously, we have been ungodly. O command Thy angel of death, who wields the avenging sword, to withhold his arm; and say to him, It is enough. Let us live, and we will praise Thy name. Though we are not worthy of Thy grace, we are yet in need of it. Though we are all children of death, Thou hast promised to be merciful to the penitent. O then, bestow Thy grace upon us, and grant us life for the sake of Jesus, our only Mediator and Intercessor. Have mercy, have mercy upon us,

Thou God of mercy. Be gracious unto us; spare us, good Lord. Be gracious unto us, help us, O Lord God.

Have mercy upon the poor and needy who have been attacked by the pestilence; who suffer hunger and privation; who lack all care; and who are forsaken by all men. Support them with Thy consolations; and let Thy Spirit bear witness with their spirit that they are Thy children, even though they die of this pestilence. O Lord, hear our prayer; protect our country. Then will we say: The Lord hath done great things for us. Yea, Lord, Thou canst deliver all who call upon Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

O God, our Refuge strong and great,
Our Fortress and our Tower!
We flee for pardon to Thy Grace,
For succor to Thy Power.

Forgive us, Lord, for Jesus' sake,
Cease from Thine anger sore;
Let righteousness and mercy kiss,
Pour out Thy wrath no more.

Within Thy secret place, Most High,
Let us forever hide,
And underneath Thy shadow, Lord,
Forever safe abide.

The pestilence in darkness walks,
Destruction wastes at noon;
Ten thousand fall at our right hand:
O Lord, defend Thine own!

Bid Thine avenging angel sheathe
His angry, reeking sword;
And let his fatal arrows fall
All harmless at Thy word.

Heal us, O Lord; save us, O Lord;
Command the plague to flee:
Then shall our hearts and lips upraise
A grateful song to Thee.

— 1903.

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS DURING A CON- FLAGRATION.

MEDITATION.

Amos 7: 4-6. And behold, the Lord called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part. Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The Lord repented for this. This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.

FROM this passage of Scripture we learn in particular three things. First this, that God has a hand in the events which befall men. This is true also of conflagrations. Therefore the prophet says: The Lord called to contend by fire. God does this *immediately*

when He sets forests and houses on fire by lightning. He does it *mediately* when he permits fires to originate through incendiaries, or through the imprudence or carelessness of men. When a Christian hears, therefore, that fire has broken out in the place in which he lives, he concludes: This is not a mere accident, but this the Lord has done. Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it? The Christian remembers that he too is under the mighty hand of God, and that God may see fit to afflict him also at this time. He bows before God therefore, and beseeches Him to protect and guard him. He commends himself to God in childlike confidence, believing that all things shall work together for good to them that love God.

Secondly, we learn from this passage of Scripture, that God often employs fire to punish and chasten men. For the prophet says: "The Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part." God punishes the sins of men. And He must punish them, both because He is holy and hates sin, and also because He is just and must fulfil the threats of punishment and chastening which He has made against the disobedient and wicked. And God actually does punish men on account of their sins, either individually or as a body. He punishes them individually, when He lays

crosses and sickness upon them, withdraws His blessing from them, and lets them suffer various distresses. Thus they are made to feel what it means to forsake the Lord, and not to live in His fear. But if this chastening does not produce the fruits of repentance, God sometimes manifests His wrath by sending plagues upon the whole community. For this purpose He frequently employs fire, and through it spreads terror through entire districts, and often works great havoc.

Among the sins which God punishes in this way is the desecration of the Sabbath,—the employment of the day, not for His service, but for sinful pleasures, as we learn from Jer. 17: 27. Another sin thus punished is ingratitude for the great and innumerable mercies of God, as may be seen from Num. 11: 1. Again obstinate impenitence is sometimes punished thus, as may be seen from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, recorded in Gen. 19. A Christian should therefore be extremely careful to avoid these sins, in order that He may not provoke God to punish him and his brethren with fire. And when he hears of a conflagration that has started, he must regard it as a well-deserved judgment of God. He must remember his sins, and repent, lest the rod of God smite him also. He must permit himself to

be aroused by the fire to repentance and a bettering of his life, and to the promise and actual rendering of a new obedience.

Finally we learn from this passage, that God may be moved by an earnest and fervent prayer to turn His wrath into favor. For the prophet says: "O Lord God, cease, I beseech Thee: by whom shall Jacob arise? for he is small. The Lord repented for this: This also shall not be, saith the Lord God." Thus God was moved, by the humble intercession of the prophet for the people, to regard them again with favor, to turn his thoughts of wrath into thoughts of peace toward them, to have mercy upon them, and to cease from punishing them with fire. The effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man still availeth much. And when a conflagration has broken out, the Christian should seek refuge in prayer. He should commit himself and all that is his to the oversight and protection of God. He should earnestly pray for those upon whom the misfortune of fire has fallen, or who are immediately threatened by it. He should believingly, fervently, and unceasingly sigh: "O Lord, cease from Thy punishment; for who else can help but Thou?" Then shall he obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord, Thou art infinitely good and kind; but Thou art also a terrible God when Thou art angry and manifestest Thy displeasure by judgments upon men. I do not now behold Thy countenance gracious as I have so often beheld it at other times. Now I see that thou art angry. And who can stand before Thine anger or shield himself against Thy hot displeasure? On every side I hear tumult, and cries, and lamentation, and weeping. My heart quails; my strength has forsaken me; my soul is affrighted. A conflagration is raging, and without Thy will and permission it would not be doing so. I am indeed, not yet aware of the actual origin of this fire. But this I know, that my and my fellow-men's iniquities and sins are the real cause of it. Our sins have come before Thee. They have exhausted the long-suffering with which Thou hast forborne so long, and have brought Thy punishment upon us, to show us that Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness, neither shall evil dwell with Thee.

Lord, Lord, we are sinners, great sinners, who have deserved Thy wrath. We do not hide our iniquity. We confess that we have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and are no more worthy to be called Thy children. We behold before us

Thy fiery indignation, and know that Thou couldst in a few moments utterly destroy us. But O Lord, do not do so. Cease from Thine anger. In Thy wrath remember the mercy which Thou hast promised to those who seek Thy face. Do not think only of our sins, but think also and much more of the precious and all-sufficient atonement of Thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. For His sake spare us, and reward us not according to our works. Quench Thy fiery indignation in the blood of the Lamb. O heavenly Father, look upon the sufferings of Christ. He is the propitiation for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. And for His sake we beseech Thee to have mercy upon us.

In this hour of distress and trouble I lean upon Thy mercy, and turn to Thee for help and deliverance. I commit myself and my family, my house, my property, and all that Thou hast given me to Thy care and protection. Extinguish the flames before they gain the upperhand. Quench them before they approach my house. Strengthen me in faith, in trust, and in the hope of Thy mercy; and let me not grow faint-hearted, even if the danger should come nearer. If the flames should come nigh my dwelling, grant me prudence and common sense, so that I may conduct myself in such a manner as will redound to Thy glory and my own best interests. And

when all is happily past, I will praise Thy name, and declare without ceasing what great things Thou hast done for me.

Have mercy also on those, O God, who must now look on while the flames devour their houses and goods. Fill their heart with good courage, and let them hope in Thee. Be Thou their strong Shield and Help in the great trouble which has befallen them; and mercifully deliver them. Have compassion on those who are threatened by danger. Command the flames to cease raging and to spare their dwelling. Speak but the word, and it shall be done. Remember Thy precious promise: "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord Thy God, the Holy One of Israel, Thy Saviour." Remember Thy promise, and fulfil it in mercy.

Bless the means which have been provided for extinguishing the fire, and let them accomplish the desired result. Fill all those who run to the rescue with true love for those in distress, with tender pity for them, and with Thy fear, so that they may faithfully assist and help the afflicted ones. And if wicked men should appear upon the scene to rob and plunder, move their hearts with compassion, that they may desist from their wicked purpose and may not further grieve and injure those who have already met with loss.

Bring our troubles to a speedy end. Let order and quietness be restored within our walls. Do Thou Thyself extinguish the smouldering flames, that they may not break out again.

O Lord, grant that we may be humbled by this judgment which Thou hast visited upon us, and be taught henceforth to dread Thy wrath, and no longer wilfully to transgress Thy commandments, but rather to walk before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days. Graciously hear my prayer and that of all other Christians, and send us deliverance. Then will we praise and magnify Thee for this and all Thy great mercies, here in time and there in eternity. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

And art thou with us, gracious Lord,
To dissipate our fear?
Dost Thou proclaim Thyself our God,
Our God for ever near?

Doth Thy right hand, which formed the earth,
And bears up all the skies,
Stretch from on high its friendly aid,
When dangers round us rise?

And wilt Thou lead our weary souls
To that delightful scene,
Where rivers of salvation flow
Through pastures ever green.

On Thy support our souls shall lean,
 And banish every care:
 The gloomy vale of death shall smile,
 If God be with us there.

While we His gracious succor prove
 'Midst all our various ways,
 The darkest shades through which we pass
 Shall echo with His praise.

— *Dodridge, 1755.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS WHEN HE HAS MET WITH LOSS BY FIRE.

MEDITATION.

Job 1: 21. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

THESE are the noble words which Job uttered when, in quick succession, the sad tidings of the different misfortunes which destroyed his children and his earthly property reached him. Among these tidings was this: "The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them." Even this dreadful news did not dismay him, nor cause him to lose his self-possession. And he furnishes an excellent example for Christians who have suffered loss through fire. Christians should learn from the example of

the godly and imitate them. St. Paul writes, Rom. 15:14, "Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

When Christians therefore, in accordance with the hidden and just counsel of God, are made to suffer the loss of earthly property, they should retain their composure, and endeavor to imitate the example of Job. That pious man not only accepted everything at God's hands with resignation, but committed himself trustfully to God's will and purposes. Christians should do the same. They should, therefore, observe the following duties: First, they should believe that God has not forsaken them, but should draw near to Him in childlike humility, asking Him for other and new blessings. Secondly, they should keep up their courage when they see how much less they possess than formerly, and pray and work all the more diligently, believing that God will amply compensate them for that which they have lost. Thirdly they should trust firmly in God, and rest assured that He can find a thousand ways in which to make good the loss which they have sustained; and that in His great faithfulness He will certainly do so after He has attained in them the purposes which He designed by afflicting them.

If Christians who have met with loss through fire conduct themselves in this manner, they shall experience without fail that it is an easy thing for God to bless them again with earthly goods, and that He will take away their poverty, and deal with them in such a manner as shall constrain them to exclaim at last: Blessed be the name of the Lord.

PRAYER.

Lord, almighty God! How dreadful a thing it is to fall into Thy hands! How unendurable is Thy wrath when Thou lettest it fall upon men. We have experienced this truth in the conflagration with which Thou hast visited us, and by which Thou hast taken away from us a large part of Thy blessings previously bestowed. We acknowledge that we have amply deserved Thy punishment. We acknowledge our sin unto Thee, and our iniquity do we not hide. We have not always employed Thy gifts as faithfully as we ought. We have frequently been unjust stewards. We owe Thee perhaps more than ten thousand talents. It is no wonder then, that Thou hast chastened us in Thine anger, and punished us.

Alas, that we should have sinned so greatly against Thee! Alas, that we should have so grossly offended against Thee! We fall down

at Thy feet, and humbly beg Thee for mercy. We abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes. We seek Thy face: O let us for Christ's sake find favor in Thy sight. Attend unto us, and hear us: we mourn in our complaint, and make a noise. Rebuke us no longer in Thine anger, neither chasten us in Thy hot displeasure; but have mercy upon us, O Lord; for we are weak. O Lord, heal us; for our bones are vexed. Have mercy upon us according to Thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Enter not further into judgment with Thy servants; for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified. Remember that we are dust and ashes. Show us a token for good. Comfort us again, after having smitten us so hard. Heal us again after having wounded us so sorely.

Replace by Thy blessing what the flames have devoured and reduced to ashes. Raise up sympathizing friends to assist and help us. Bless our occupation and labor, and establish the work of our hands; yea, the work of our hands establish Thou it for Thy name's sake. Let goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our life; and let us never again feel that Thou art angry with us. Make us careful in handling fire and lamps, that we may not by our carelessness bring terror and loss to ourselves or our neighbors.

Above all make us truly good. Grant that the cross which Thou hast laid upon us may lead us to Thee and keep us faithful to Thee till our end. Strengthen us to avoid all sin and to walk before Thee in newness of life. Give us grace so to employ the new blessings which Thou shalt give us, that we may be able to render an account to Thee. Let Thy Spirit lead and guide us, and at last graciously bring us to the heavenly kingdom which Thou hast prepared from the foundation of the world for them that love Thee. Amen.

HYMN.

8, 6, 8, 8.

When I can trust my all with God,
In trial's fearful hour,
Bow, all resigned, beneath His rod,
And bless His sparing power,
A joy springs up amid distress,
A fountain in the wilderness.
O, to be brought to Jesus' feet,
Though sorrows fix me there,
Is still a privilege; and sweet
The energies of prayer,
Though sighs and tears its language be,
If Christ be nigh, and smile on me.
Then blessed be the hand that gave,
Still blessed when it takes:
Blessed be He who smites to save,
Who heals the heart He breaks.
Perfect and true are all His ways,
Whom heaven adores and death obeys.

—*Josiah Conder, 1818.*

THE CHRISTIAN THANKS GOD WHEN
THE CONFLAGRATION HAS BEEN
EXTINGUISHED.

MEDITATION.

Rom. 12: 15. Rejoice with them that do rejoice,
and weep with them that weep.

THIS is an earnest exhortation to the Christian to sympathize with his fellowmen in all that may happen to them. It is an exhortation which the Christian should bear in mind at all times, and especially when he sees that his brethren have suffered by fire or other misfortune, and that they "eat ashes like bread, and mingle their drink with weeping." He should weep with those who weep, and share their sorrow as one that affects him also, because he is a member together with them of the same body of Christ. And when he sees that his neighbors are recovering from the blow which they have suffered, and, now that their anxiety has passed away, are becoming joyful again, he should join with them in hymns of praise to Him who has so gloriously helped them, and has done all things well.

When a conflagration has raged and been extinguished again, the Christian should show his sympathy for the sufferers first of all by not

wickedly rejoicing over the misfortune which has befallen them. He should not think in his heart: I am glad of it. For to do this would be an evidence of malice, meanness, and lack of love, such as are unbecoming to a Christian. He should rather remember that the fire might have brought loss to him as well as to them; and therefore he should mourn over it just as if it had befallen him, and weep with those who weep. He should furthermore refrain from judging unkindly of others, and from regarding them as extraordinarily great sinners. He should not think himself better than others, nor say that the misfortune which has befallen them is a just punishment for their wickedness. He should rather say to himself: "The Lord hath done this. And who hath been His counselor?"

The Christian who has not suffered from the fire should, however, go much farther than this in showing his sympathy for those whose property has been destroyed. He should give back everything which they may have entrusted to him during the conflagration, and not retain the least article; for to do this would be to steal, and to add to the distress of those who have suffered. Such a course would be inexcusable. Finally he should be ready to contribute to their relief, and give gladly, willingly, and liberally according to his ability, just as he would have

that they should do for him, if he had suffered the loss. Thus he will weep with those who weep, and share in their sorrows.

So also he should rejoice with those who do rejoice. When those whose property has been damaged by fire begin to take courage, and lift up their hearts to God, and give thanks to Him because He has been the health of their countenance and their God,—he should unite with them in spirit, and join with them in praising and glorifying God. He should give heartfelt thanks to God for helping his brethren, as well as for guarding and defending him against harm. If Christians act thus, they will be doing their duty, and will reap blessing and prosperity. God will then be well pleased with them, and keep them in His care. He will think of them in every future trouble, and deliver them. He will always let them taste and see that the Lord is good.

PRAYER.

O holy and righteous God! Thou hast now executed upon us Thy judgment. Thou wouldest punish, chasten, and make us better. Thou hast, indeed, afflicted us sorely; but Thou hast also done great things for us, so that we are constrained to say, "Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments." I tremble yet when I recall the crying and sobbing, the weep-

ing and lamentation which but a short time ago filled my ears. And when I think of the many parents, and children, and infants, and women with child, and sick, and dying persons, who have been in imminent peril of perishing in the flames, and remember how they cried out to Thee in their distress, I cannot even now entirely regain my composure. Thousands might have been reduced to utter want and misery.

Thou hast indeed permitted many persons to lose their possessions and become poor; but in Thy wrath Thou hast yet remembered mercy. Thou commandedst the fire to stand still and not to spread farther. Thou heardest the sobbing of the needy, and turnedst Thy gracious countenance upon us again, so that the greedy flames did not devour all. What grace and mercy! For this we give Thee praise and glory.

Especially do I praise and thank Thee for the great mercy which Thou hast shown me, Thy poor creature, on this occasion. I am no better than my brethren. I have deserved the same punishment. Yet Thou hast graciously spared me. Thou hast given me courage and strength in the hour of need; Thou hast warded off the fire from my home; Thou hast let me and my family and all my possessions remain untouched by the flames. O how shall I sufficiently praise Thee for Thy goodness? Ten thousand thanks I

give to Thee, O Lord, for all Thy grace to me. O that I had a thousand tongues to sing Thy glorious praise. But since I cannot extol Thee, O God, in any measure at all proportionate to Thy goodness, accept my will for the deed, and let my poor lisping praise be acceptable in Thy sight. Give me grace and strength henceforth to yield my whole life as a thank-offering to Thee, earnestly avoiding all sin, following after holiness, clinging steadfastly to Thee, and serving Thee till my happy end. Have mercy upon me for Christ's sake, and keep me in Thy grace, that I may enjoy Thy favor here in time and there in eternity.

Look in mercy upon those who have suffered through this conflagration. Cheer and sustain them, and enable them to see Thy will in what they have suffered. Give them patience in their affliction, and let them, in true resignation, cling only to Thee and Thy grace. Replace their loss by Thy blessing, and grant them grace to recognize Thy Fatherly love and goodness and faithfulness to them, that they may praise and glorify Thee without ceasing.

And now, O Lord, our God, be merciful to us in all time to come. Take us under Thy protection and guardianship. Preserve us from all danger of fire in the future. Remember us always in mercy. Do good unto us in Thy good

pleasure for Thy mercy's sake. Do good unto us till the end of our days. Then will we offer unto Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving and praise. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
Be Thy gracious Name adored!
Lord, Thy mercies never fail:
Hail, celestial Goodness, hail!

Though unworthy, Lord, Thine ear
Deign our humble songs to hear.
Purer praise we hope to bring
When around Thy throne we sing.

There no tongue shall silent be;
All shall join in harmony;
That through heaven's capacious round
Praise to Thee may ever sound.

Lord, Thy mercies never fail;
Hail, celestial Goodness, hail!
Holy, holy, holy Lord,
Be Thy glorious Name adored!

— *Benjamin Williams, 1778. a.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS IN TIME OF
EXCESSIVE RAIN.

MEDITATION.

Gen. 6: 17. Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

IN these words God spoke to the godly Noah, and revealed to him the terrible judgment which He was about to send upon the earth because of its wickedness. And in them God teaches Noah first of all, that the coming of the deluge was a matter which rested entirely with the wisdom and power of God; for He says, "*I, even I, do bring a flood of waters.*" Again, He indicates that this flood would be sent in wrath on account of men's sins. Finally, He says that He will use it to punish and destroy the sinner, and that it shall "destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every-thing that is in the earth shall perish."

All this took place as God had said. The deluge came; the waters rose; all flesh was destroyed; everything that had breath, and was not with Noah in the ark, died. This is a proof at once of the *truth* of God, who fulfils to the letter all that He has threatened or promised, and of the *righteousness* of God, who bears long

and patiently with the sins and transgressions of men, but who at last visits them in His wrath and punishes them, if they do not turn from their sins and truly repent. And although God has promised that He will never again destroy the world by a universal deluge, and will certainly keep His promise, yet God frequently lets floods, and cloud-bursts and seasons of protracted rain come upon men, in order to humble them, and awaken them from their sins.

When this is the case, Christians should remember first of all that these things come from God and are under His control. And therefore they should trustfully commit themselves into His hands, firmly believing that He will do all things well. Again they should remember that God is angry on account of their sins and disobedience. Therefore they should examine themselves, in order to detect the evil which is in their heart and life, and should mourn over their sins and repent, seeking grace and forgiveness for Christ's sake. Finally they should bear in mind that this excessive rain may easily end in their destruction. They should not be indifferent, but thoughtfully reflect upon the dangers to which they are exposed. And then they will soon see that, if the wet weather were to continue too long, the soil would become too wet, the grain and fruit would rot, man and beast

would be deprived of nourishment and food, and scarcity, famine, hunger, sickness, and finally general distress would result. This should move them to turn to God, to commend themselves to His care, to cry unto Him in their distress, and to beseech Him to ward off the peril which threatens them, seeking in Him, with child-like and believing hearts, the deliverance and help which they so greatly need. If they do this, God will turn unto them again, and will be as merciful to them as He was angry before. He will have compassion upon them, and grant them fruitful seasons, filling them with food and gladness.

PRAYER.

O God, glorious in power and majesty, who hast spread out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, and who hast created every thing that lives and moves and has being! We see with our eyes that Thou dost rule all things, and doest whatsoever Thou pleasest. How quickly Thou canst change the appearance of the earth! How quickly Thou canst deprive it of its beauty and grace! How quickly Thou canst take from us the gifts and blessings which Thou hast but recently vouchsafed to us!

We realize this truth keenly at the present time; for Thou hast opened the windows of heaven, and lettest the rain fall unceasingly.

Sadness and gloom and desolation prevail everywhere. The sun withholds its warming and quickening rays; the eye beholds nothing but dark and heavy clouds; and the heart is depressed. The earth is covered with water; the grass and the grain are almost rotting; the streams are swollen and threaten to overflow; the roads are becoming impassable and traffic most difficult. And who can tell what other perils threaten us in this distress which has come upon us?

O Lord, Lord, look with compassion upon our misery, and have mercy upon us. Thou revealest plainly that Thou art angry with us. And we acknowledge that we have excited Thine anger by our sins, our disobedience, our unfaithfulness, our obstinacy. Yes, yes, we have sinned, sinned greatly, and come short of the glory of God. We have sinned against heaven and in Thy sight, and are no more worthy to be called Thy children. We have deserved, richly deserved, that Thou shouldest withdraw Thy favor from us, and let us feel Thy displeasure. Therefore we acknowledge our sin, and hide not our iniquity. We humble ourselves before Thee in true repentance, and pray Thee for mercy and grace. O have mercy upon us again, now that Thou hast smitten and afflicted us. Remember us and bless us. Remember that we are but dust

and ashes. Remember the perfect atonement of Jesus, and for His sake let us find mercy.

Thou hast promised, that, as long as the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease. Thou hast promised that Thou wilt satisfy the desire of every living thing. Thou hast given the blessed promise that Thou wilt never again destroy mankind with a flood. O remember Thy promises now. O fulfil them in us, Thou God of all grace and truth. Close the windows of heaven, and command the rain to cease. Chase away the dreary clouds in the sky, and let us behold the glad sunshine once more. Dry and warm the wet earth. Give to the grass and to every growing plant new life. Freshen all the fruits of the field and the orchard, and let them mature, that, in due season, we may gather with joy the needful supply of grain and wine and oil, and of everything that is necessary for our support.

Grant us in the future such weather as will cause the crops to thrive. Preserve us from hail and tempest. Give us the early and latter rains in their seasons. And when Thou hast watered the earth, let the sun shine forth and quicken it, that grass may grow for the cattle, and grain for man. But grant also that we may then receive with thanksgiving the gifts which Thou dost so

wonderfully preserve and so graciously bestow; and that we may never forget the great things which Thou hast done for us. Soften our hard hearts by the goodness and faithfulness which Thou dost manifest, so that we may honestly strive to better our lives, avoid all wilful sin, follow goodness and virtue, and walk as in Thy sight until our end. And then at last, in Thy mercy and faithfulness, receive us into Thy eternal heavenly kingdom. There will we give Thee more perfect praise for all Thy mercies than our weakness here permits us to give. There we will give Thee eternal praise and thanks. Amen.

HYMN.

7s, 6 lines.

Holy Jesus, in whose Name
 Thou hast bid Thy servants claim
 Of the Father's love to grant
 All the good they wish or want:
 Trusting in Thy Name alone,
 Draw we near Thy Father's throne.

Son of Man, to whom is given,
 With the majesty of heaven,
 For mankind to mediate:
 Partner Thou of man's estate,
 Hear us when with Thee we plead
 For Thy flock to intercede.

Saviour of the world to Thee
 Ever bows the Church her knee;

Thee, her only Advocate;
Thee, exalted to Thy state,
With the Holy Ghost, most high
In Thy Father's majesty.

—*Richard Mant, 1837.*

THE CHRISTIAN PRAYS IN TIME OF DROUGHT.

MEDITATION.

James 5: 17, 18. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

IN citing the example of Elijah, the object of the holy apostle James by no means is to teach us that it lay within the will and power of the prophet to give or withhold rain from the land; but to show us that a believing, sincere, and acceptable prayer possesses wonderful power, and can accomplish great things; and to establish beyond all doubt the truth of the assertion which he had just made, that the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man avail-eth much.

From these words of James we learn three things. *First*, that God alone is Lord of the rain, and has power to send or withhold it. On His

will alone depends the opening or the closing of the windows of heaven. This power not only belongs to God as the Lord of nature and as the Creator and Preserver of the world, who is able to do all things according to His good pleasure, and who holds all things in His hand; but it is a power which is expressly ascribed to Him in His holy Word. For the prophet Jeremiah says, Ch. 14, v. 22: "Are there any among the vanities of the Gentiles that can cause rain? or can the heavens give showers? art not Thou He, O Lord, our God? therefore we will wait upon Thee: for Thou hast made all these things." From God come the moistening and the drying of the earth, the rain and the lack of rain. And it is to Him that Elijah turns with his prayer.

We should, therefore, ever recognize God's hand and counsel, and humbly adore when we behold the things which He does upon the earth. Not to nature, and not to fate dare the Christian ascribe the rain and the lack of rain, but to the Lord of nature. He must recognize the concurrence and sovereignty of God, and submit himself to these completely.

Secondly, the sending of rain at the proper time is to be recognized as a gracious act of God; and the withholding of rain, as a punishment from Him. The prayer of Elijah had reference to both contingencies. First he prayed that it

might not rain, so that the people might thus be punished for their sins. Afterwards he prayed that God would remove the punishment, turn His wrath into mercy, and refresh the dry earth with rain.

The sending of rain is in truth a great mercy of God. For by it the earth is moistened and enabled to bring forth fruit. The seed that lies in the earth is made to germinate. Field and forest are strengthened. Men and beasts are refreshed. All nature is revived, and its beauty preserved. Who can fail, therefore, to recognize in the rain a gracious blessing of God? For this reason God promises this blessing to men principally on condition that they walk in His ways and keep His commandments. For He expressly says in Deut. 11:13-15: "It shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, that I will give you the rain of your land in due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full."

And just as it is an act of great mercy on God's part when He sends the needful rains; so on the other hand it is an infliction of heavy

punishment when He withholds them, and burdens the land with drought and heat. This punishment God permits to come upon men when they sin against Him, and refuse to walk in the way of His commandments. And as this punishment is just, so it is also heavy and severe. For how wretched and miserable every thing looks when the rain has failed, and heat and drought oppress? The earth fairly cracks, and has no power to bear fruit. The meadows look like deserts. The trees decay, the fruit falls, the cattle suffer, man languishes; and scarcity, want, sickness, and pestilence threaten to arise. The whole land in the middle of summer is fairly clothed in the garb of death. What a sad sight, and bitter punishment!

If, therefore, we see such a condition of affairs before us, we should not remain indifferent, but should examine into ourselves, acknowledge our sins, and with humble and contrite heart seek reconciliation with God through Christ Jesus. With broken spirit we should beseech Him to take away His just punishment from us.

Thirdly, a sincere and acceptable prayer is the surest means of obtaining from God every good thing, and consequently also of securing the removal of His punishment and the sending of rain to moisten the parched earth. This may be seen from the example of Elijah. He was, in-

deed, a prophet of the Lord, but at the same time also a man, a sinful, mortal, impotent man, just as we are. He prayed, and God granted his prayer. He prayed in accordance with the will and good pleasure of God, and was heard. The same joy may be ours also. We too may secure a like blessing; for there is no respect of persons with God. He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him. If we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us.

When, therefore, Christians see that God has stretched out His hand in punishment over them by withholding the rain and sending heat and drought, they should have recourse to prayer, and should come before God in such a way as that their prayer may be a sweet savour before the Lord. They should sincerely confess their sins, and seek forgiveness by faith in Jesus Christ. They should pray without doubting, and pray without ceasing until they have received the desired help. Then they may rest assured that God will hear their prayer, and give them what their heart desires. Then they shall speedily see their desire fulfilled before their eyes. For the Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear Him; He will also hear their cry, and will save them.

PRAYER.

O Lord, our God, who art merciful, and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, help us in this great distress, in which we draw near to Thee and pray for Thy mercy. Help us in this great trouble which has come upon us. Help us, and deliver us in mercy. In ancient days Thou didst threaten Thy people, that, if they did not obey Thy voice and observe Thy commandments and statutes, Thou wouldest make the heaven over their head to be brass, and the earth beneath them to be iron, and the rain of the land powder and dust; and that thus Thou wouldest punish them till they were destroyed.

This just and terrible threat Thou now beginnest to fulfil in us. Thou hast for some time past visited us with a continuous heat and drought which are consuming everything. Thou hast for a long time actually locked the heavens against us, and bidden the clouds to forsake us, or at least refuse to give us rain. It seems, indeed, as if the heaven above us were become brass, and the earth beneath us iron. O how pitiable and desolate it looks everywhere, in our fields and meadows, on the hills and in the valleys, in the orchards and the vineyards! The earth opens its mouth and sighs to be refreshed. Men and beasts pant from the great heat. The

trees are dying, the grass is withering, the fruit cannot grow nor ripen. The cattle want for food, and our rivers, brooks and wells threaten to dry up and to leave us without water. And what dreadful consequences may not ensue! O Lord, Lord, look down upon us in mercy, and bring our distress to an end.

We must indeed confess before Thy holy presence, that we have richly deserved to be thus punished on account of our constant disobedience to Thy commandments, our shameful ingratitude for Thy many benefits, and our great abuse of the mercies which Thou hast bestowed upon us. Yes, we must confess, that Thou wouldest not deal unjustly if, on account of our manifold iniquities, Thou shouldest inflict far severer punishments upon us. But, O Father of Mercies, we fall prostrate and humble at Thy feet, and pray Thee, forgive us our great sins, and regard us again with favor. Have mercy upon us, and remove this heavy plague from us. It is Thou that doest good unto us men. It is Thou that givest us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, and fillest our hearts with food and gladness. Thou waterest the hills from Thy chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. Thou causest the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that Thou mayest bring forth food out of the earth.

All eyes wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. O remember us now for Thy name's sake, and refresh us with a vivifying and penetrating rain.

O Thou almighty Creator and Preserver of all things! Open the windows of heaven, and visit again the land which pants for Thy goodness. Water it, that the fruits in field and orchard and vineyard may mature, that the grain in the fields may grow, that the grass in the meadows may spring up, and that men and beasts everywhere may find nourishment and sustenance once more. And although, O God, we have hitherto been disobedient children, we are yet, through Christ, children who are reconciled to Thee. Therefore we humbly cry to Thee in His name, and pray that Thou wouldest hear our sighing and supplication in this our urgent need and continued distress, and wouldest gladden every living thing with water from above.

Protect our land also and our dwelling from contagious diseases, from fire, from famine, and other well-deserved punishments. Let the punishment which we have now experienced serve to make us better, and cause us to turn to Thee with all our heart. To this end grant us Thy Holy Spirit, that He may make entirely new creatures of us, who shall walk faithfully in Thy ways, and keep Thy commandments. Sanctify

us wholly through Him, that our whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless until the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, O Lord, our God, we hope in Thy mercy. Let us live to spread abroad Thy praise. Hear our prayer, and we will be heartily thankful for Thy grace. We will magnify Thy glorious name as long as we live here in this world, and magnify it forever in the world to come. Hear us, dear Father in heaven; for Thou art our God. Hear us in Thy immeasurable faithfulness, O Thou who hast promised to be our Help and Stay in every trouble! Hear us for Thine own sake. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

How are Thy servants blest, O Lord!

How sure is their defence!

Eternal Wisdom is their guide,

Their help Omnipotence.

From all my griefs and straits, O Lord,

Thy mercy sets me free;

While in the confidence of prayer

My heart takes hold on Thee.

In midst of dangers, fears, and death,

Thy goodness I'll adore;

And praise Thee for Thy mercies past,

And humbly hope for more.

My life, while Thou preserv'st my life,
Thy sacrifice shall be;
And O, may death, when death shall come,
Unite my soul to Thee.

—*Joseph Addison, 1712. a.*

JOHN FREDERICK STARCK'S

PRAYER-BOOK

FOR USE IN
PREGNANCY, LABOR, AND CONFINEMENT
AND FOR THE BARREN

BEING
BOOKS VI AND VII OF STARCK'S DAILY HAND-BOOK

CONTAINING ALL THE
MORNING AND EVENING DEVOTIONS,
CONSOLATORY PRAYERS AND
MEDITATIONS

OF THE GERMAN ORIGINAL EDITION

TOGETHER WITH
STANDARD ENGLISH HYMNS

TRANSLATED BY
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Author of "Bible Teachings" and "The Life of
Philip Melancthon"

BURLINGTON, IOWA
GERMAN LITERARY BOARD
1904

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PREFACE.

THE protection, help, care, and answer to prayer, which the faithful and loving God has promised to all believers, should be especially called to mind by pious Christian wives whom God has blessed with the prospect of motherhood. What David said is still true: "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is His reward." And pious wives will always regard the matter thus, just as Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and other holy women did, who, when God had blessed them, gave thanks to Him. When godly wives perceive that they have conceived, there awakes within their heart the ardent hope that their child may be born sound and well-formed. And in fervent devotion they lift up their hearts to God in prayer, confident that the almighty and merciful God will hear their prayer. The nearer the time approaches, the more earnestly they pray to Him who can do all things. They wait upon Him. And when God has heard their trustful prayer, and their child has been safely born, they extol the goodness of God with heart and mouth.

In this book, pious wives will find desirable and ample directions how to conduct themselves

in a true Christian spirit before and after confinement. And may the faithful God, by a blessed answer to prayer, gladden every pious heart which humbly prays for His grace.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, who through Thy holy birth hast hallowed our sinful birth, succor with Thy mighty grace all those who cry unto Thee in their need. Help them, quicken them, comfort them, cheer them. Be Thou nigh unto them; for human help is insufficient. Behold how their heart sighs to Thee, how their lips tremble, and their eyes are raised to Thy sanctuary. Speak to them the comforting words: "I will be with Thee in trouble; I will deliver thee. Fear thou not, for I am with thee." Then shall they sing Thy praise and say: "The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Blessed be the name of the Lord, now and evermore." Amen.

FOR USE IN PREGNANCY.

MORNING DEVOTIONS.

MEDITATION.

EVERY true Christian should commit himself to the care and grace of God every morning before he goes to his work, and pray God to guard his body and soul. And certainly, to rise in the morning in good health, to spend the day in safety under the protection of the Highest, and to be able to lie down again in bed at night in health, is a privilege which we owe to the mercy of God. This is evident from the fact that many a person spends a most unhappy day,—a day in which he is well in the morning, but must be carried to bed sick or lame or wounded or crippled in the evening.

But if every Christian should commend himself to the care of God, how much more ought a pregnant woman do so. She should earnestly and fervently pray to God every morning (1) to preserve good and holy thoughts in her heart throughout the day, in order that she may think of Him constantly and commune with Him. (2) She should commit her body to His protection, beseeching Him to guard her steps and to pre-

serve her from dangerous falls and other misfortunes. (3) She should commend her unborn child to God's care, praying that it may grow, increase in strength, be properly formed, and be filled with the gifts of the Spirit. (4) She should be particularly careful to avoid anger, strife, and contention, and not to take everything so seriously or to be irritated by every little thing; so that she may not by her self-will and anger bring harm, sickness, or even death upon the young being entrusted to her. If she thus commits herself to the grace and goodness of God, she has the comfort of knowing that God will give His angels charge concerning her to keep her in all her ways.

MORNING PRAYER.

Lord God the Father, what Thou hast created, Lord God the Son, what Thou hast redeemed, Lord God the Holy Ghost, what Thou hast sanctified, I commit into Thy hands. To Thy name be praise, honor, glory and thanksgiving in this morning hour and to all eternity. Amen.

O gracious, kind and merciful God, who art the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning! I thank Thee from my inmost soul that Thou hast so graciously guarded me during the past night, and hast per-

mitted me to behold once more the glad light of day. O Thou Light of my soul! grant me this morning a bright light in my heart, that I may be strengthened in love toward Thee, and in trust and hope. Sanctify my soul, and let me walk with Thee to-day. Let me meditate upon Thee, find my delight in Thee, and comfort myself with the thought of Thy mercy. Grant that I may not wilfully sin against Thee to-day, but walk before Thee in holiness and righteousness, and obey Thee as Thy child. Let me remember that Thou art always with and about me, and hearest all that I say, and seest all that I do; so that I may be encouraged and admonished to continue faithful to Thee, and not to offend Thee.

I commit my life into Thy hands. I commend my body to Thy care. Do Thou watch over my steps. O God of all goodness and mercy, Thou hast placed me in a condition in which I have special need of Thy protection and grace. Therefore, Thou Defense of Thy children, I humbly beseech Thee to watch over my going out and my coming in. Let Thy grace guide me, and Thy angel lead me by the hand, that I may not slip, nor fall, nor injure myself or the fruit of my body. Preserve me, strengthen me, support me. Ward off everything that would be hurtful to me. Let Thy good Spirit guide me in safety.

Enable me to reach the evening unharmed. Then will I thank Thee for all the benefits which Thou hast graciously bestowed upon me in body and soul.

And now, O Lord, bless me and keep me : Lord, let Thy face shine upon me, and be gracious unto me : Lord, lift up Thy countenance upon me, and give me peace. The grace of the Father defend me; the love of Jesus shelter me; the succor of the Holy Spirit sustain me now and evermore. O bless me when I sleep and when I wake. Bless me in all my ways, and take not Thy blessing from me. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

Forth in Thy name, O Lord, I go,
My daily labor to pursue,
Thee, only Thee, resolved to know
In all I think or speak or do.

The task Thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfil;
In all my works Thy presence find,
And prove Thy good and perfect will.

Thee may I set at my right hand,
Whose eyes my inmost substance see,
And labor on at Thy command,
And offer all my works to Thee.

For Thee I ever would employ
Whate'er Thy bounteous grace hath given,

And run my course with even joy,
And closely walk with Thee to Heaven.

—*Charles Wesley, 1749. a.*

EVENING DEVOTIONS.

MEDITATION.

WHAT a great blessing it is to be permitted to reach the evening unharmed, and to be able to say: "I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep!" O, what a sweet repose is ours when we can retire to rest at peace with God, at peace with our own conscience, and at peace with all around us. Then we can say with joyful heart, "The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad," and enjoy a blessed repose.

In this way pregnant women also should lift their heart and eyes and voice to God at the close of a day spent in safety. They should thank God for the protection which His grace has afforded, and commend themselves to His love and mercy. If the night is a gloomy season for all, it is particularly so for pregnant women. Accordingly, they should pray to God (1) to ward off all terrors and misfortune, because those who are with child are often exposed to the gravest perils by a sudden fright; (2) to pro-

tect them against sickness and pain; (3) to let His blessing rest constantly upon them and their unborn offspring. And when the morning has dawned again, they should (4) come before God with thanksgiving, and say with David: "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits."

EVENING PRAYER.

O gracious, loving, and merciful God, I come into Thy holy presence with joyful heart. Lord, how excellent is Thy loving-kindness! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings. Yes, under the shadow of Thy wings I have gone out and in this day, protected from danger and harm, and reaching the evening in safety. Blessed be my loving heavenly Father, who has carried me in His arms as His child! Blessed be Jesus Christ, my Saviour, who has led me by the hand, and guarded me against every harm! Blessed be God the Holy Ghost, who has not departed from me!

O Thou Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, abide with me to-night. Continue Thy lovingkindness unto them that know Thee; and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart. Keep my body and my soul from all harm. Let

me commune with Thee even in sleep; and when I awake let my thoughts be found with Thee. Behold, I know none other Helper but Thee, Thou God of Israel. Let Thy angels surround my bed, and guard me against everything that would harm me or the being which Thou hast graciously entrusted to me. Dispel from my heart all needless cares, evil thoughts, and morbid fancies. Chase from my bed and from my house every peril that threatens me.

In God's name I lie down to rest; I sleep in the arms of Jesus; His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me. O Thou, my Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, abide with me. Thou, O Triune God, art my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? Thou art the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? Yea, I fear nothing; for God is with me. I fear nothing; for I have Jesus with me. Though the night be dark about me, Jesus is the light of my soul. Though fear should threaten, the Holy Ghost will be my Comfort and Stay. Protect me during this night, and let me, safely kept and guarded, behold the glad sunshine on the morrow: then shall my mouth be filled with Thy praise; then will I thank Thee for all Thy benefits. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M. Pec

Inspirer and Hearer of prayer,
 Thou Shepherd and Guardian of Thine,
 My all to Thy covenant care
 I, sleeping or waking, resign.

If Thou art my Shield and my Sun
 The night is no darkness to me;
 And fast as my minutes roll on,
 They bring me but nearer to Thee.

A sovereign Protector I have,
 Unseen, yet forever at hand;
 Unchangeably faithful to save,
 Almighty to rule and command.

His smiles and His comforts abound,
 His grace, as the dew, shall descend;
 And walls of salvation surround
 The soul He delights to defend.

— *Augustus M. Toplady, 1774, a.*

DAILY MEDITATION.

WHEN by God's blessing a wife has conceived, she should heartily rejoice, and give thanks to God. But she should also bear in mind, (1) that in this condition she is exposed to many pains and hardships of which she previously knew nothing. These pains have

been laid upon the female sex since the fall into sin, as we see from Gen. 3:16, where God says: "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children." But they should remember (2) that God will alleviate these pains, because He is gracious; and that He is able to remove them, because He is mighty. Yes, because all things shall work together for good to them that love God, these very trials, which a state of pregnancy involves, will build them up and exercise them in true religion. They can learn to know the wisdom, goodness, power, and grace of God to a degree which would not otherwise be possible for them.

If a despondent mood, sleeplessness, or an unfavorable turn of affairs should intervene, they should (3) call to mind their baptismal covenant, and remember that God is their Father and will not forsake His children. For like as a Father pitieth His children, even so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. They should think of God's power, and believe that He will give them the needful strength, and will finish the work which He has begun in them. And if occasionally their burden shall seem almost intolerable, they should remember that nothing is impossible with God, and that, if He but speaks the word, the raging billows of suffering must be

calm. (4) But even if the pain should endure for a long time, they should not on that account lose their trust in God nor cease to hope, but should remember that God has already set the hour in which He will help them. He often says to us, as He did to Mary His mother, "Mine hour is not yet come." We should therefore faithfully and patiently endure the delay, and trust in the divine promise which says, "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee."

Should you object that many women lose their life during pregnancy and confinement, I reply that God has appointed the hour of death for every one. If pregnant women know of others in their condition who have died, they also know of many more who have lived and become happy mothers. And the number of the latter is far greater than that of the former. Where out of a hundred scarcely one has died, and ninety-nine have been happily delivered, it is contrary to the faith and love which we ought to have toward God to anticipate always the worst. It manifests a lack of trust in God, and is sinful, to give way to despair and thus practically to say: "Although God has helped hundreds and thousands of others, He will nevertheless not help me." Who has told you this? Who has sowed this distrust in your mind? Do you not know that God is

good and almighty? Therefore reverse the matter, and say: "The God who has helped so many thousands will also help me." Build on this hope with all your soul. Withstand all doubting thoughts, and look up to the mighty hand of God.

But granting that God has decreed that a woman shall die during labor, she dies blessed; for she dies in the fulfillment of her calling. Just as it would be a blessed death, if a pious person should die while he was praying, or a preacher while he was in the pulpit, or a charitable man while he was giving alms, or a king on his throne while he was doing justice to the cause of the poor; so also it is a blessed death if a wife dies during pregnancy or labor, for she dies in her calling, and in a condition which is well-pleasing to God. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of such godly wives; and after all their pain and suffering He will satisfy and refresh their soul with eternal joy and gladness in heaven. How and when we shall die a happy death, we should leave to the wisdom of God. "If only I obtain salvation, if only I enter heaven" the believing soul should say, "the Lord may appoint my end at any time and in any manner which pleases Him."

But pregnant women should be careful not to bring death upon themselves by their own anger

and arbitrariness. And because in their present condition many things are extremely injurious to them, they should keep all the stricter watch upon themselves. The fact that many pregnant women are altogether too irritable, cross, and sensitive, can not be commended in them but must be blamed. Nothing which those around them do suits some women at such a time. They become angry about everything. No food, no word, no chair is right for them. But they should restrain themselves and pray against this fretful spirit. For if they thus excite themselves by anger and spitefulness, they are in danger of bringing upon themselves fatal fevers. And in that case they must not say that God has done it. They have done it themselves. Not their pregnancy, but their own bad temper, anger, and obstinacy will then have cost them their life. And I would ask all Christian wives whether, if their offspring is compelled to draw its growth from them under such conditions, they are not themselves to blame if they give birth to children who are as irritable, passionate, self-willed and obstinate as their mothers were during the period of gestation. Therefore the Christian wife should gain the mastery over herself and control her feelings by the grace of God, so that she may not by her own fault cause disaster. If she prays to God for the needful grace, He,

who is the giver of every perfect gift, will not deny her petition. And then in life or in death she can comfort herself with the assurance of God's favor.

And since Christian wives, when they find themselves in this condition, are anxious to partake of the Lord's Supper, they should, when they partake of it, all the more earnestly commend themselves and their offspring to the Lord Jesus, and through His strength abide in faith, in love, and in holiness of life.

DAILY PRAYER.

O holy, good, and merciful God! I come before Thee, bringing my supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. O mighty God, Thou hast blessed me in wedlock, and for this I give Thee heart-felt thanks. And I pray Thee to grant me in due time the joy of beholding my child. Since Thou, O righteous God, hast burdened this condition with pain and discomfort, I will, with Thy help, willingly bear these burdens.

O Lord, my God, be Thou with me when hours of sadness, days of pain, and sleepless nights oppress me. I know that in Thine almighty power Thou canst alleviate my sufferings, and that in the midst of them Thou dost remain my

Father, my Support, my Helper, my only Refuge, and my gracious God. Thou, who hast ordained that I should suffer these things, hast power also to moderate them. If my sufferings should become great and almost unendurable, I will nevertheless not despair, but will remember that Thou, O faithful God, wilt not let me be tried above that which I am able, but wilt with the trial also make a way of escape that I may be able to bear it. When I sigh for Thy help, and say, How long, O Lord, how long? hearken unto me, and let the hour of Thy help speedily appear.

Hold before my eyes and engrave upon my heart the memory of Thine almightiness; and let me not become dismayed, if it should happen that others who are in my condition are afflicted with tedious illness or even die in labor. Let me then call to mind over and over again how many women have been safely delivered during the year, and how small a percentage have died in confinement. Therefore I will trust in Thine almighty power. I humbly beseech Thee to give me a joyful maternity. Help me in the hour of labor, and gladden me with a healthy and well-formed child. If, however, Thou hast decreed that I shall die in this condition, Lord, Thy will be done. I know I shall then die in my calling, I shall die in Thy grace, I shall die in Thy arms,

I shall die as Thy child, I shall die happy. And Thou wilt bring me to everlasting joy and salvation.

Meanwhile, O my God, grant me Thy holy Spirit, that He may keep my heart filled with good thoughts. Give me a quiet and gentle mind, and help me to control my temper, so that I may not by anger or spitefulness bring death upon myself or my offspring. Grant that my child may be strong in body and mind, and develop under the shadow of Thy grace, till Thou shalt bring it to the light of day, and shalt turn all my pain into gladness and my sorrow into joy. And now, O Lord, my God, I have poured out my heart before Thee; do Thou, in Thy mercy hear me. Deliver me according to Thy promise, have mercy upon me in Thy faithfulness, help me in Thy love, gladden me according to Thy lovingkindness. I know, Thou hast never yet forgotten me; Thou wilt not forget me now. Amen.

HYMN.

(Sieh, hier bin ich, Ehrenkoenig.)

8, 7, 4, 7

Here behold me, as I cast me

'Neath Thy throne, O glorious King!

Sorrows thronging, childlike longing,

Son of Man, to Thee I bring.

Let me find Thee!

Me, a poor and worthless thing.

Look upon me, Lord, I pray Thee,
 Let Thy Spirit dwell in mine;
 Thou hast sought me, Thou hast bought me,
 Only Thee to know I pine.
 Let me find Thee!
 Take my heart, and own me Thine.

Naught I ask for, naught I strive for,
 But Thy grace so rich and free;
 That Thou givest whom Thou lovest,
 And who truly cling to Thee.
 Let me find Thee!
 He hath all things who hath Thee.

—*Joachim Neander, 1679.*

Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1858. a.

THE PREGNANT WOMAN REFLECTS UPON HER CONDITION AS BEING WELL-PLEASING TO GOD.

MEDITATION.

GOD has Himself instituted the state of matrimony, and desires by means of it to perpetuate the human race. For He said to our first parents in Paradise: "Be fruitful and multiply." The Christian wife should therefore rejoice when she observes that she has conceived. She should remember (1) that children are a gift of God, which He bestows upon some and denies to others, in order to show that

it is divine and not human power that brings them into being. As soon as a wife perceives that God has thus blessed her, (2) she should reflect that God has remembered her in mercy, just as we read in Scripture that God remembered Sarah and Rachel. (3) She should be content, give thanks to God, and believe that her present condition is one which God has sent her in blessing. She should remember, as she goes out and in, that she does so under God's protection and guardianship. His Holy Angels have a special charge concerning her.

If pain and discomfort come, (4) she should remember that God has ordained her for this condition, but that He will not forsake her. She should all the more place her trust in Him; and then she shall experience that He doeth all things well. To this end (5) she should persevere in prayer, avoid anger and spitefulness, and remain steadfast in faith, in love, and in holiness. She should believe that she is in a condition which is well-pleasing to God, and in which she can count on His support and help, and should be confident that whatever she asks in accordance with God's will, shall be granted to her according to His grace and mercy.

PRAYER.

O loving God and Father! How shall I sufficiently acknowledge, thank, and praise the Fatherly faithfulness which has placed me in my present condition. Lord, Thou hast remembered me in mercy, and granted me this blessing of wedlock. And though this condition involves hardships, I yet know that I enjoy Thy favor, and that my state is one which Thou has ordained and with which Thou art well pleased. Thou knowest, Lord, that I have not entered upon marriage frivolously; that I have been chaste, and have shunned the company of the impure and the wanton; and that I have entered into wedlock in Thy fear, in chastity, and to Thy glory. And now that Thou hast remembered me in mercy, and bestowed a blessing upon me, I receive it as a gift from Thy hands.

O Lord, let me experience Thy grace. Be merciful unto me, hear my prayers and sighs, and let my supplications find acceptance at Thy throne of grace. Defend and guide and guard me. Comfort me when I am sad, and let Thy Spirit always bear witness with my spirit that I am Thy child. Be my Refuge to whom I may ever flee, and before whom I may pour out my heart. Cheer me when I am despondent; strengthen me when I am faint. Be my Helper, and assure me that

Thou art with me in trouble, and wilt deliver me. Be my Support when I suffer pain and discomfort. Be my Deliverer, and in due time loose my bonds and grant me gladness. O heavenly Father, be my Strength. O, support, strengthen and sustain me. O Jesus, be my Intercessor to plead for me with the Father, and to bring my weak and pain-laden prayer before Him. O Holy Ghost, be my Comforter, and assure me, that I enjoy God's favor, that I am His child; that I shall have a happy delivery, and receive help from above. Yea, Thou Triune God, be with me in my present state. Then shall I be comforted, protected, guarded, and delivered. Amen.

HYMN.

(Was von aussen und von innen.)

7s. D.

Lord, Thou art my Rock of strength,
 And my home is in Thine arms.
 Thou wilt send me help at length,
 And I feel no wild alarms.
 Sin nor death can pierce the shield
 Thy defence has o'er me thrown:
 Up to Thee myself I yield,
 And my sorrows are Thine own.

Yes, on Thee, my God, I rest,
 Letting life float calmly on;
 For I know the last is best,
 When the crown of joy is won.

In Thy might all things I bear,
In Thy love find bitter sweet,
And with all my grief and care
Sit with patience at Thy feet.

Let Thy mercy's wings be spread
O'er me; keep me close to Thee;
In the peace Thy love doth shed
Let me dwell eternally.
Be my All: in all I do
Let me only seek Thy will.
Where the heart to Thee is true,
All is peaceful, calm, and still.

—August Hermann Francke, d. 1711.
Miss Winkworth, Tr. 1855.

THE PREGNANT WOMAN THANKS GOD FOR HER FRUITFULNESS.

MEDITATION.

ALTHOUGH most people regard children simply as a gift of nature, the Holy Scriptures teach us to regard them differently, when they say, "The fruit of the womb is His reward." Therefore a believing couple should pray for this gift, as well as for all other gifts. As far as harlots and other unbelieving persons are concerned, they do indeed obtain this gift, but only because God lets nature have its course. For they do not beget children to the

glory of God, and are only concerned to satisfy their sinful passions. But believing husbands and wives gratefully accept their children as a gift from God.

When therefore a pious wife perceives that she is fruitful, she should (1) thank God for it, and remember that God now imparts to her the promised blessing of wedlock. (2) She should act prudently and within the bounds of moderation, propriety, meekness, and Christian modesty, so that she may not by her own fault, for example by over-work, reaching too high with her arms, lifting too heavy objects, giving way to anger, and the like, blight her hopes. (3) She should daily commend herself and her offspring to God, and pray Him to fashion, sustain, strengthen, and preserve it, and at last usher it safely into the world. (4) She should not only not murmur on account of the trials to which her condition subjects her, but should not become irritable, passionate, or revengeful towards her husband, her servants, or other persons; for to act thus would be an evidence of dissatisfaction with her condition, and of an ingratitude which God will not fail to observe, and for which He may make her atone.

PRAYER.

Lord, almighty God, who art a God of life, who givest breath and life to us all, and who hast blessed the state of wedlock with fruitfulness! I thank Thee that Thou hast remembered me and granted me this blessing. Thou, O mighty God, hast shown greater kindness to me than to many others who sigh in vain for this blessing. Therefore I pray Thee to let me realize truly Thy kindness to me. I commit myself wholly to Thy keeping. Preserve me from anxiety, fright, and falls, and from danger and misfortune of every kind that might rob me of Thy gift. Give me true Christian prudence in all that I undertake and do, that I may not myself destroy the blessing which Thou hast conferred.

Lord, how great is Thy wisdom by which Thou fashionest man so wonderfully! How great is Thy omnipotence by which Thou causest us to see the light of day! How great is Thy goodness by which Thou dost in this manner preserve and multiply the human race! I thank Thee, my God, that Thou hast chosen me to be an instrument for this Thy glorious work, and hast blessed me with fruitfulness. O graciously complete the work which Thou hast begun; sustain what Thou hast given; strengthen what Thou hast bestowed; preserve what Thou hast con-

ferred. Let me pass my time in safety beneath Thy protection. Preserve me from shocking sights and terrifying news. And if, in Thy will, it should be decreed that I shall see or hear such things, do Thou nevertheless, by Thy almighty hand, preserve my offspring from harm. Let me in due time become a happy mother, and joyfully behold my child. Lord, let Thy goodness and truth accompany me in all my ways. Keep my foot from stumbling, my limbs from being broken, my body from every harm. Preserve and guard the gift which Thou hast bestowed upon me. In the meantime, I will look to Thy help. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help; my help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. Amen.

HYMN.

Psalm 34.

C. M.

Through all the changing scenes of life,
In trouble and in joy,
The praises of my God shall still
My heart and tongue employ.

Of His deliverance I will boast,
Till all that are distressed
From my example comfort take,
And charm their griefs to rest.

O magnify the Lord with me,
With me exalt His name!

When in distress on Him I called,
He to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just;
Deliverance He affords to all
Who on His succor trust.

O make but trial of His love:
Experience will decide
How blest are they, and only they,
Who in His truth confide.

Fear Him, ye saints, and ye will then
Have nothing else to fear;
Make you His service your delight,
He'll make your wants His care.

—*Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, 1696. a.*

THE PREGNANT WOMAN COMMENDS
HERSELF AND HER OFFSPRING
TO GOD.

MEDITATION.

WHEN a Christian wife learns that she has conceived, she should, in addition to her ordinary occupations, attend specially to the following duties. (1) She should commend herself to God every day and every hour, and beseech Him to lead, strengthen, and

guide her. (2) She should diligently commend her offspring to God, and pray for it. For in this lies the difference between believing and unbelieving wives, and between good women and harlots: unbelieving women and harlots curse their pregnancy, despise their future offspring, do not thank God for it, do it harm if they can, and perhaps have no good intentions at all with regard to it. But godly wives have a different spirit; whenever they pray, they bring their child before God in their petitions. They beseech Him to fashion it beautifully, to give it sound and straight limbs, to keep it alive, and to let it be born healthy. They love their future offspring before they see it, are concerned for its preservation, and provide beforehand the clothing which it will need after birth. They are solicitous not only for its physical well-being, but for its spiritual well-being also, and pray that after its natural birth it may be born again through Holy Baptism.

PRAYER.

O Holy Father and Creator of men! Behold I come to Thee into Thy sacred presence, and humbly pray for Thy grace. O mighty God, in Thy goodness Thou hast blessed me with the prospect of motherhood; but who am I that I should bring a child into the world? How

many mothers have conceived and yet have not given birth! How many have rejoiced at the prospect of becoming mothers, and yet have been disappointed! Therefore, O Lord, Lord, all my desire is before Thee; and my groaning is not hid from Thee. Lord, Lord, in mercy preserve what **Thou** hast so graciously bestowed. I commend myself entirely to Thy gracious care. Lord, keep me by day and by night, that no harm may befall me. Guard me when I go out, or when I walk upon the streets; and bring me home again well and unharmed. Let my soul be peaceful and happy. Let me constantly commune with Thee, and find my delight in Thee. Let my heart be the dwelling of Jesus and the temple of the Holy Spirit. May Jesus live in me, guide, rule, and sanctify me. Ward off from me all vexation, anger and fright. Let me not see any persons who are deformed; but if I should do so, preserve my offspring.

Let Thy visitation preserve my spirit. Guard my life, and watch over my every step. The Lord preserve my going out and my coming in from this time forth and even for evermore. In the name of the Triune God I go out and in. In the name of the Triune God I lie down to sleep, and rise again. In the name of the Triune God I attend to my daily round of duties. O Triune God, guard, keep, and protect me by Thy power.

Bear me up in Thy hands, and guard me in all my ways, so that no evil may befall me. Then will I praise and thank Thee all the days of my life.

I also commend to Thee, O Triune God, my unborn child. Lord, I pray for it, I plead for it. O hear me for Thy goodness sake, hear me for Jesus' sake. O grant to my child the gift of Thy Holy Spirit. Let it, like John the Baptist, be filled even in the womb with heavenly power. Give to it a well-balanced mind and a godly heart, that it may fear and love Thee all its days. Give it also **sound** and straight limbs, a healthy body, and a good endowment of bodily and mental faculties. And when Thou hast thus in secret fitted it out with glorious gifts of body and soul, let it soon after birth be born again in Holy Baptism. Thou, O Jesus, hast said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." Thou didst take the children into Thy arms and bless them. O, in due time take my child also into Thy arms, and bless it. Bestow upon it the earnest of our inheritance, the Holy Spirit; sanctify and renew it unto life eternal. Make of it a child of heaven and an heir of eternal life, that I with my child, and my child with me, may one day become partakers of everlasting salvation. Amen.

HYMN.

L. M.

Shine on our souls, eternal God!
With rays of beauty shine;
O let Thy favor crown our days,
And let their round be Thine.

Did we not raise our hands to Thee,
Our hands might toil in vain:
Small joy success itself could give,
If Thou Thy love restrain.

With Thee let every week begin,
With Thee each day be spent,
For Thee each fleeting hour improved,
Since each by Thee is lent.

Thus cheer us through this toilsome road,
Till all our labors cease;
And heaven refresh our weary souls
With everlasting peace.

Philip Doddridge, 1755. a.

THE PREGNANT WOMAN CALLS TO MIND
GOD'S PROMISES.

MEDITATION.

WHILE the condition of pregnant women is at times distressed and painful, they have precious and comforting promises of God. In these He assures them of His help in trouble. He declares that He will

not forget nor forsake them, but will help them, deliver them, carry them in His hands, and the like. Every pious woman with child should (1) make herself acquainted with these promises, and comfort herself with them. (2) She should remember that the promises of God are meant for all, and consequently for her also. And if the desired help, and the promised deliverance do not make their appearance at once, she should (3) not despair on that account, nor imagine that the promise is of none effect and will not be fulfilled. On the contrary, she should (4) trust firmly in the promises of God. For when His hour has come, He will do what He has promised. Meanwhile, however, (5) she should continue in prayer, trust, and hope, till at last the hour dawns in which she, who has hitherto been sad, shall joyfully praise God and say: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped me. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad."

PRAYER.

My God! When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee: Thy face, Lord, will I seek. Thou knowest, O God, that without Thee I am nothing, and can do nothing. Who can loose my bonds but Thou alone? Who can help me but Thou only? Therefore I come to Thee, and cling to Thy words of promise. Thou hast

said, that Thou wouldest not forsake Thine own; O forsake not me: that Thou wouldest be with them in trouble; O be with me: that Thou wouldest help Thine own; O help me: that Thou wouldest strengthen them; O strengthen me: that Thou wouldest deliver them; O deliver me.

Lord, I know not to whom to go in my present state but to Thee. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul, Thy word of promise raises me up. Because I know that Thou art the Defender of Thy faithful ones, the Helper of the forsaken, the Refuge of the afflicted, the Support of the helpless, I am of good courage, and cling to Thee. I will hold fast to Thee and Thy Word. If my pain and anxiety increase, I will sigh: "Lord, I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." Though Thy help delay, it will come at last. Thou, Lord, layest burdens upon us, but Thou dost also help us to bear them. And if Thou dost help me, my burden shall not become too heavy for me.

Thou wast my Refuge even when I lay as a child in my mother's arms; and Thou shalt remain through all my life my Refuge in every time of need. God is my Refuge and Strength, a very present Help in trouble. Therefore will I not fear. And why should I? The Lord is

with me. The Lord is my Light and my Salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? In God's name I will cheerfully perform the task which awaits me; and with His help I will labor and overcome. O gracious God, strengthen my faith, and give me unshaken confidence in Thy promises. Let me, guarded against all mishaps, reach the time of my delivery in safety. In the meantime I will pray and sing, trusting in Thee, until at last I am joyfully delivered. Then will I through all my life offer to Thee in Thy temple and in my heart the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all Thy mercies. Amen.

HYMN.

7s.

Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,
Jesus loves to answer prayer:
He Himself has bid thee pray,
Therefore will not say Thee nay.

Thóu art coming to a King:
Large petitions with Thee bring;
For His grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much.

With my burden I begin:
Lord, remove this load of sin!
Let Thy blood, for sinners spilt,
Set my conscience free from guilt.

Lord, I come to Thee for rest :
Take possession of my breast ;
There Thy blood-bought right maintain,
And without a rival reign.

While I am a pilgrim here,
Let Thy love my spirit cheer :
As my Guide, my Guard, my Friend,
Lead me to my journey's end.

Show me what I have to do,
Every hour my strength renew ;
Let me live a life of faith,
Let me die Thy people's death.

—*John Newton, 1779.*

THE PREGNANT WOMAN REJOICES IN THE ALMIGHTY POWER OF GOD.

MEDITATION.

IF we reflect upon the conception, preservation, growth, and birth of a child, we cannot sufficiently exalt the omnipotence of God. Without His almighty power no child could be born. And when one is born, it is always a miracle in the eyes of the believers.

Knowing this, a pious wife should (1) trust in the omnipotence of God. As many children as she has already borne, so many tokens of God's almighty power has she already received. And

since the almighty hand of God has helped others, she should (2) comfort herself with the assurance that He will also help her. (3) Whenever she is inclined to lose courage she should recall the words of the angel who said, "With God nothing shall be impossible," Luke 1: 37. Since, then, there is nothing impossible with God, the pregnant woman should take comfort. (4) Should complications arise which did not arise in the case of others, she should still not lose her trust in God. For just because God is almighty, He can heal all dangerous wounds, remove all heavy burdens, and turn aside all threatening perils. While human beings are at hand at the birth of a child, God's almighty hand is there also, ruling over all, and causing everything to come to a happy conclusion.

PRAYER.

O my God, how my soul rejoices when I think of Thine omnipotence — of Thine almighty hands, which can do all things, and deliver out of every trouble. If I look upon myself in my present state, I see that everything depends upon Thy omnipotence. Thy almighty power must carry me in its arms, if I am not to fall; Thy almighty power must alleviate my sufferings, yea, must do all that needs to be done in the trouble that awaits me. When I think of my

offspring, I realize that Thy omnipotence must preserve, strengthen, and guard it, and cause it to behold the light of day. My greatest consolation now, as always, is, that Thou art an almighty God. If I am weak, Thou art strong. If I am needy, Thou art all-powerful. If I am impotent, Thou art limitless in power.

This consolation no one shall take from me, that God can help me, and that God will help me. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto God the Lord belong the issues from death. Since God is almighty, no evil can befall me. Since God is almighty, I shall be delivered out of trouble. Therefore, O almighty God, I commend myself wholly to Thee. Watch over me, keep me, strengthen me. Let Thine almighty power preserve me during my pregnancy, and bring me in safety to the time of my delivery. Let Thine almighty power strengthen me when the hour of my travail approaches, support me when it has come, and be with me in the beginning, middle, and end of my labor, till I have become a happy mother. Let Thy almighty power provide for me a safe delivery and a joyful vision of my child.

Whatever happens, I will not fear, because I have a mighty God. I will not despair when my need becomes great, because I have an almighty God. I will be of good courage while I

labor; because I have an almighty God. In my need and pain I will cry and sigh: O almighty God, help me! I lean on Thee, I hope in Thee; Thy child waits for Thy hour of help. O merciful Father, hasten to me then with Thy almighty power; let me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice. Let Thine omnipotence chase away from me all danger. Let it preserve my offspring, give me strength, and gladden me with a happy delivery. Then as long as I live I will praise and magnify Thy almighty power and say: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

My God, my only Help and Hope,
My strong and sure Defence,
For all my safety and my peace
I bless Thy Providence.

The daily favors of my God
I cannot sing at large:
Yet let me make this holy boast,
I am the Almighty's charge.

Lord, in the day Thou art about
The paths wherein I tread;
And in the night, when I lie down,
Thou art about my bed.

Naked I came into the world,
And nothing with me brought;
And nothing have I here deserved,
Yet have I lackèd nought.

I do not bless my laboring hand,
My laboring head, or chance;
Thy Providence, most gracious God,
Is mine inheritance.

—John Mason, 1683.

THE PREGNANT WOMAN COMFORTS HERSELF WITH THE HOPE OF GOD'S HELP.

MEDITATION.

IF needy persons see that great perils, manifold sufferings, heavy burdens, and toilsome labors await them, they are nevertheless of good courage if they can count on some one to stand by them in their perils, to help them in their sufferings, to lighten their burdens, and to assist them in their labors. And this is a comfort which pregnant women also have. (1) Though they know their confinement is not unattended by danger, they say, "The Lord is with me; therefore I will not fear." (2) Though they must endure much pain, they say to God, "Thou art my Helper and my Deliverer. My God, delay

not." (3) Though their burden daily becomes heavier, they remember that, while the Lord lays burdens upon us, He also helps to bear them. (4) Though they tremble at the thought of their approaching labor, they believe that the Lord will bless them, and help them through it. Should not the fact that God in the Holy Scriptures calls Himself their helper be especially calculated to make them of good courage? If God helps them, they are helped indeed. While human beings often have the will, but lack the ability to help; God is both willing and able to do so. Therefore, though matters look ever so gloomy and full of danger, such women should cling to this truth: "The Lord is my Helper."

PRAYER.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance. Yes, my God, this is my comfort in my present condition, that Thou wilt give me the help of Thy countenance. Do I pale with fear? Thou canst drive away all fear by Thy glorious help. Are my cheeks wet with tears? Thou canst wipe them away by coming to my rescue. Therefore I will trust in Thee, and will meet every threatening peril with this comfort: "God is my Helper, and will remain my Helper."

O mighty God, when I need help, make haste to help me. If Thou dost not save me, I am lost. When my sufferings become severe, do Thou mercifully sustain me. Thou art my only Refuge, my God, and my Stay. I know of none other. If Thou wilt not help me, who can? Help me, O God of my salvation, and hear me when I pray. Help me when danger threatens. Help me when my hour has come. With joyful trust I will say with Jesus, "Father, save me from this hour." If I have Thee with me, I shall overcome, and my sorrow shall be turned into joy. How gloriously Thou hast helped others! O help me also! Thou art still the same strong, merciful, and almighty God that Thou hast always been. Lord, I persevere in prayer like the woman of Cana, and say: "Lord, help me! yea, I will not leave Thee, I will not cease, until Thou hast helped me."

Come, O Father of grace and mercy, and help Thy child, whom none can help but Thou. Come, O Jesus, Thou Saviour of all men, abide with me till I am safely delivered. Come and support me, O blessed Holy Spirit, and give me the assurance of speedy help. O Triune God, to Thee I flee, in Thee I trust. Help me whenever Thou pleasest; but while Thou delayest, support me by Thy grace. Help me in my need; deliver

me out of my trouble. Then will I give Thee joyful thanks. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Dear Refuge of my weary soul,
On Thee when sorrows rise,
On Thee, when waves of trouble roll,
My fainting hope relies.

To Thee I tell each rising grief,
For Thou alone canst heal;
Thy Word can bring a sweet relief
For every pain I feel.

Hast Thou not bid me seek Thy face?
And shall I seek in vain?
And can the ear of Sovereign grace
Be deaf when I complain?

No, still the ear of sovereign grace
Attends the mourner's prayer:
O may I ever find access,
To breathe my sorrows there.

—*Anne Steele, 1760.*

FOR WOMEN IN TRAVAIL.

DEVOTIONS AT THE APPROACH OF LABOR.

MEDITATION.

WHEN St. Paul promises to Christian women that they shall be saved in childbearing, he does not mean that they can acquire salvation by bearing children. For salvation has been acquired by Jesus Christ alone through His sufferings and death. But the apostle means that, although women must in consequence of the Fall bring forth children with sorrow, they nevertheless have a gracious and merciful God; and that if they die in labor, they can and will nevertheless die happy, if they only continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. It is required of them, therefore, (1) that they remain in faith. When the time of labor approaches, they should not lose their trust, nor murmur against God; but should continue in faith, hope, and confidence, even though it goes hard with them; and should call to mind the precious promises and the omnipotence of God.

They should (2) continue in charity or love. They should love God from the heart, and say

in faith: "Be not far from me, O Lord, with Thy help and grace." They should continue in love toward Him and their fellowmen.

They should make their peace beforehand with God and their neighbor. And it is a good custom, followed by many pregnant women, to partake of the Lord's Supper, thereby sanctifying and offering themselves unto God.

They should also continue in love toward their offspring. They should be careful not to do it any injury by neglect, nor to destroy it by their arbitrary conduct; but should willingly listen to the advice of those who surround them at the time. If loveless mothers, during labor, act obstinately toward their poor children, and are not willing to bear what God lays upon them, nor to fulfil a duty from which empresses, queens and princesses are not free but which they must fulfil as well as other women; then they become the murderesses of their own offspring, and will have to accuse themselves before God of having slain their children before birth by their refusal to labor properly.

Finally they should (3) continue in holiness with sobriety. They should lead a holy, chaste, and Christian life, pray diligently for their child, shun sin, and, abiding in holiness, await the hour of their delivery.

PRAYER.

Lord, God Almighty! Faithful and loving Father! The hour of travail comes nearer and nearer. Do Thou come near unto me with Thy help and grace. I draw nigh to Thee in prayer, with heartfelt trust, full confidence, and living faith in Thy gracious assistance. O draw nigh unto me in Thy goodness and mercy. Come to me, abide with me in my travail. If I have Thee with me, then I have the mightiest Deliverer, the most powerful Helper, the truest Friend. Give me a cheerful spirit, and enable me to be undismayed. Dispel all fear, and let the assurance that Thou art with me strengthen my soul. Strengthen my body also, that I may not grow faint, but may, by Thy power, perform and joyfully complete my labor. Thy power will make all things easy for me. Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe.

Grant also wisdom and understanding to those who attend upon me, that they may properly order everything, and may not make any mistakes in dealing with me. Bless their efforts, so that they, together with me, may magnify Thee for Thy goodness. Grant me grace to follow all good advice, and thus avoid the responsibility of harming myself or my child. O gracious God, hear my prayer and that of all those

who surround me. If it be Thy will, let my labor be short and end happily. Let me joyfully behold my child alive, and become a happy mother.

Behold, Lord, here am I. Do with me as seemeth good in Thy sight. Leave me not, neither forsake me, Thou God of my salvation. Abide with me in the extremity of my trouble; strengthen my patience, that I may not grow weary, and my hope, that I may not grow discouraged. I am able to do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me. O heavenly Father, bless, keep, and preserve me. O Jesus, abide with me, strengthen and quicken me. O Holy Spirit, make intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered, and bear witness with my spirit that I am in truth a child of God. The love of the Father shield me; the grace of the Son quicken me; the fellowship of the Holy Ghost sustain me. Amen.

HYMN.

O Thou, to those all-searching sight
The darkness shineth as the light!
Search, prove my heart; it pants for Thee:
O burst these bonds, and set it free.

Wash out its stains, refine its dross;
Nail my affections to the cross.
Hallow each thought; let all within
Be clean, as Thou, my Lord, art clean.

If in this darksome wild I stray,
 Be Thou my Light, be Thou my Way;
 No foes, no violence I fear,
 No fraud, while Thou, my God, art near.

When rising floods my soul o'erflow,
 When sinks my heart in waves of woe,
 Jesus, Thy timely aid impart,
 And raise my head, and cheer my heart.

Saviour, whene'er Thy steps I see,
 Dauntless, untired, I'd follow Thee;
 O let Thy hand support me still,
 And lead me to Thy holy hill.

If rough and thorny be the way,
 My strength proportion to my day;
 Till toil and grief and pain shall cease,
 Where all is calm, and joy, and peace.

—*Nicholas Louis, Count Zinzendorf.*
John Wesley, Tr. 1739.

MEDITATION AT THE APPROACH OF LABOR.

GODLY wives often fear and tremble when the hour of labor is at hand. But why should ye be afraid? Ye have God with you. The God who has laid these pains upon you will also help to bear and overcome them. In the hour of your travail remember (1) that God is a kind and gracious God. His thoughts

toward you are thoughts of good and not of evil. All things shall work together for good to them that love God. Since He is a gracious God, He will show mercy unto you, and have compassion upon your need and sorrow. Remember (2) that God is faithful. He knows your strength and power of endurance better than you do yourselves. God is faithful, who will not let you be tried above that ye are able, but will with the trial also make a way of escape that ye may be able to bear it. Remember (3) that God is merciful. Like as a Father pitieth His children, so He will pity you. Remember (4) that God is mighty. What you are not able to do, God is; for His strength is mighty in our weakness. Do not look on your own weak strength, but on the power of God. He will do all that is needful, and will strengthen your hands and arms and limbs. Thus David gives all glory to God, when he says: "I was cast upon Thee from the womb."

Remember, finally, (5) that your pains will not endure long, — not for days and years like David's troubles, or like the sickness of the impotent man at Bethesda, but only for an hour. And if they should endure longer, God is able to bring them to a happy end at last. You should trust in Him, and console yourself with the promise of His help.

PRAYER BEFORE LABOR.

LORD God Almighty! The hour of my labor is now at hand. I come to Thee and pray, O leave me not! O be with me, give me strength to labor, and deliver me graciously. Lighten the pains of travail which Thou hast laid upon woman. Thou didst impose these pains upon Eve and her daughters at the same time that Thou didst mercifully promise to send Jesus, the seed of the woman and the Redeemer of men. Therefore I regard the pains which I am called on to suffer, not as the punishment of an angry Judge, but as the chastisement of a loving and reconciled Father, to remind me of the Fall, and at the same time to remind me of my reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ. O strong and almighty God, help me. In Thee is my help, toward Thee is my desire. My God, I trust in Thee; let me not be put to shame. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my Help. O Jesus, who didst become man, I pray Thee, have mercy on me for the sake of Thy holy birth and incarnation. Help me to pass through this hour, and deliver me. O blessed Holy Spirit, remain in my heart, and cry, Abba, Father. Bear witness with my Spirit that even in the midst of my pains I am still a

child of God. O Thou Holy Trinity, help me, and have mercy upon me. Amen.

ANOTHER PRAYER BEFORE LABOR.

O THOU loving God, who hast promised to sustain us in our sufferings and weakness! Thou knowest my condition, and seest the ordeal for which I am preparing. All my hope is in Thee. O mighty God, who dost sustain the doe and her young in the wild forest, in frost and snow; O let my offspring be commended to Thy care. Bless those who assist me in my labor, and do Thou Thyself in mercy help and deliver me. Thou hast said: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." In this Thy gracious promise I put my trust, and cheerfully begin the work to which Thou hast called me. I will be content and wait for Thy help. I will suffer patiently whatever Thou in Thy wisdom seest fit to let come upon me. Only be Thou not far from me, O Lord, Lord, my Help in trouble.

Be and remain a gracious God to the child which Thou hast entrusted to me. Preserve, O

Lord, what Thy hands have made. Loose in due time the bands of nature. And though all human beings should despair, do Thou manifest Thy power and wondrous grace in me. Let Thy strength be mighty in my weakness. Strengthen me in body and soul, soothe and lighten my pains, and let my child, sound and healthy, behold the light of day. Lay it alive in my arms and hands. Then, with outstretched arms and folded hands I will give Thee thanks, and will give my child to Thee again in Holy Baptism as an offering and as Thy child.

But if Thou shouldest have decreed that I shall yield up my spirit in labor, Thy will be done. Thou art my God, my Lord, my Father; I am Thy creature, Thy hand-maiden, Thy child. Do with me as Thou wilt. I am prepared for life or death. And though Thou slay me, yet will I trust in Thee. Grant me a patient and willing heart, steadfast faith, and firm confidence. Amen.

PRAYER DURING LABOR.

LORD, Lord, great in counsel and mighty in work! Behold here I am, sighing only for Thy help. Thou alone canst save me. I acknowledge, to Thy glory, that the birth of a human being is a miracle which is ut-

terly beyond the power of man, and which Thou alone canst work. Therefore I humbly pray Thee, O almighty God, to manifest Thine omnipotence. Thou knowest what pains I suffer; for Thou Thyself hast laid them upon me. Whether I sit or stand, whether I walk or lie down, Thou knowest it, O Lord; for Thou art ever with me. Thou seest my tears; and my sighing is not hid from Thee. I call to mind now Thine almighty power; Thou art able to do abundantly above all that we ask or think. No danger is so great that Thou art not able to deliver from it. Behold, Thy mighty hands have prepared my child, have given it flesh and blood, and have for a long time already sustained its being and life. Therefore in Thy mercy bring it to the light of this world.

Lord, Lord, who hast helped so many thousands in all parts of the world; Thou wilt also, in Thy lovingkindness, help me. I trust in Thy grace and truth. Let them keep me in all my ways. If matters begin to look threatening, speak Thy consolation to my soul, and say, "I will be with Thee in trouble; I will deliver Thee: I will not leave Thee nor forsake Thee." Let me faithfully do my part, that I may retain a good conscience; but do Thou strengthen my weakness. Then shall my sorrow be turned into joy. Amen.

ANOTHER PRAYER DURING LABOR.

O GRACIOUS and merciful God! Thou hast said: "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." In accordance with this command I now come to Thee in this hour of trouble, and cry, Abba, Father. O, hear my voice, and hide not Thyself from my supplications. Remember that I am Thy child, and let not my pains exceed my powers of endurance. Lord, when I suffer, do Thou alleviate my distress. Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy upon me. By Thy holy birth and incarnation help me, O Lord God! Sustain me, strengthen me, cheer me. O Holy Spirit, Thou Comforter in trouble, give to my soul the blessed assurance that I shall soon be a happy mother. Bring my anxious prayer before the throne of God. And when for very terror I cannot pray, do Thou, O Jesus, pray for me, and Thou, O blessed Holy Spirit, make intercession for me with groanings which cannot be uttered.

O Triune God, stretch out Thy hand to me and my child, even as we stretch out our heart and hands to Thee. Let us not perish nor suffer harm. Manifest Thy power in us; then will we praise and exalt Thy might, not only here on earth, but through all eternity. Bless my child,

Thy creature; let it not perish, but mercifully preserve it by Thy power. Help me to do my duty. And grant that by Thy grace I may joyful behold my little one. Lord God, the Father in heaven, have mercy upon me. Lord God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy upon me. Lord God the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me. Amen.

ANOTHER PRAYER DURING LABOR.

GRACIOUS and powerful God, the hour is at hand which Thou hast appointed for my delivery. Therefore I turn to Thee, and cry, Father, help me through this hour. In Thy name I begin my labor; in Thy name I will complete it. Lord, my Creator, be with me and strengthen me. Jesus, Thou Son of God, who wast born a member of our race, abide with me and quicken me. O, clasp me in Thine arms, and hold me. O blessed Holy Spirit give me patience and cheerfulness in my labor; have mercy upon me and encourage me. O Holy Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, make haste to help me. Arise, Lord, and save me, or I perish.

O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon me. O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon me. O

Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant me Thy peace. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES AND SHORT
PRAYERS TO BE USED DURING
LABOR.

Ps. 145: 18, 19. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that fear Him: He also will hear their cry, and will save them.

O MY Jesus, be with me, remain with me, help me. O fulfil my desire; for I desire nothing but what Thou hast promised in Thy Word to give, namely, Thy help.

Ps. 43: 5. Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

O my Jesus, I wait for Thy salvation, I trust in Thy help. O let it speedily appear. Thou alone art my Hope. O hear me! gladden me! deliver me! Then will I give Thee thanks forever.

Isa. 54: 6-8. For the Lord hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God. For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

My God, have mercy upon me; forsake me not: Thou art my God. O merciful God, I lift up mine eyes toward heaven, and long for Thy help. Hide not Thy face from me, strengthen me by Thy grace, support me with Thy hand. O Lord, how long wilt Thou delay?

Isa. 59: 1. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save.

I know, O God, that nothing is impossible with Thee; and therefore I trust in Thee. Lord, stretch forth Thy hand and save me, as Thou didst Peter when he began to sink. Thy hand can deliver out of every trouble. O Lord, have pity on me; I long for Thy mercy.

Ps. 91: 14-16. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

O my Jesus, since no one can help me but Thou, hasten to my rescue with Thy gracious help. Behold, I am now in trouble; O be with me according to Thy promise. I have set my love upon Thee: O deliver me. When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.

Isa. 54: 10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.

O Jesus, take not Thy grace and Thy Holy Spirit from me. Let not Thy loving kindness depart from me. Strengthen me in and for the labor which I am now performing. Remember the covenant which Thou madest with me in Holy Baptism. By virtue of that covenant Thou art my Father, and I am Thy child. O Father, remember Thy child, help Thy child, have mercy upon Thy child.

Ps. 103: 13. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him.

O my gracious God and Father! I know not where to seek and find consolation and help but in Thee alone. Therefore I cry to Thee: O help me, my Father. Have mercy upon me, my

Father. O let Thy Father-heart pity me, and let me speedily be made happy. Thou canst do it; O do so for Thy mercy's sake.

Ps. 30: 5. For His anger endureth but a moment; in His favor is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

O God, help me in pain and suffering; turn my weeping into joy. Thou alone art my Help and my Strength. Save me, and let me find grace. Do not pass Thy handmaiden by. In Thy favor is life; O do Thou sustain my life and the life of my child. Let us live before Thee, that we may praise Thy name.

Ps. 71: 1-3. In Thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in Thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline Thine ear unto me, and save me. Be Thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort: Thou hast given commandment to save me; for Thou art my rock and my fortress.

O Lord, Thou knowest well what sorrow and pain I endure. Lord, Lord, the greater my distress becomes, the more will I cry for help. I will do as Jesus did when He wrestled with death, and will pray more earnestly.

Ps. 130: 6. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning: I say more than they that watch for the morning.

My God, my firm resolve is and shall remain, not to doubt Thy help, no matter how long it may delay. Though Thou hidest Thy face from me for a small moment, yet with great mercies wilt Thou gather me.

Isa. 38: 14. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.

Out of the depths I cry unto Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice. O Jesus, Thou wilt be my Helper. All my help is in Thee. O, do unto me as Thou hast promised. In Thy name I have begun my labor; O, add Thy blessing to my endeavors. Help me and my child. Enable us joyfully to behold one another, and to live before Thee. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Ps. 25: 15-18. Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring Thou me out of my distresses. Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins.

Lord Jesus, I turn to Thee in faith: O come to me; behold how I suffer. Strengthen my faith

and sustain my confidence, that I may not fall from Thee. O, stand by my side. Lord, hear my prayer; forsake me not. O, when will the moment come that shall gladden me with Thy help?

Rev. 22: 20. Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

O my Jesus, my heart's desire and longing is, that Thou mayest come quickly. O come and deliver me; come and gladden me; come and save me. Come, and let me behold what my eyes long to see.

Ps. 39: 7, 12. And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in Thee. Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not Thy peace at my tears.

Lord Jesus, hasten to me. Save me, O God, and I shall be saved. Thou art my only refuge in this time of trouble. Therefore I flee to Thee. O come, O come, O help me.

Isa. 49: 29, 31. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength, They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

O Lord, my God, give me new strength. Bestow upon me the courage, power and strength of Thy Holy Spirit. I am too weak to perform this labor; but in the power of my God I can do all things. Lord, Lord, strengthen me this time also. My God, help me to overcome. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Ps. 94: 17, 19. Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul.

Lord God Almighty, from whom cometh all our help! Thou hast said, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble." In accordance with Thy command I cry to Thee, and say: Lord, help me, Lord have mercy upon me. Take away the sorrow and anxiety of my soul. Grant me what I hope, give me what I ask. Lord, it lies in Thy hands.

Rom. 5: 3-5. We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed.

O Lord, help me according to Thy loving-kindness and tender mercy. I wait for Thy help; I hope for a happy delivery. It rests with Thee.

Look upon me, a sorrowful woman, and make me glad again. Let Thy hour come, that I may with joyful mouth give thanks to Thee.

Ps. 142: 1, 2. I cried unto the Lord with my voice: with my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before Him; I shewed before Him all my trouble.

Lord God Almighty, who dost not despise the prayer of the needy and the desire of the humble: hearken to the prayer which we bring before Thee in our trouble, and mercifully hear us.

Ps. 55: 1, 2, 4. Give ear to my prayer, O, God; and hide not Thyself from my supplication. Attend unto me and hear me: I mourn in my complaint, and make a noise. My heart is sore pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

O Lord, Lord, Thou canst help; for Thou art an almighty God. Thou desirest to help; for Thou art my loving God and Father. O therefore hear me; cause Thy face to shine, and I shall be saved.

II Cor. 6: 2. For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

O Lord, is Thine hour not yet come? How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? Yet I know that Thou, Lord, hast not forgotten me: Thy love is too great, Thy heart too tender. O, for Thy goodness sake deliver me. O how long, how long will Thy help tarry?

Ps. 119: 169, 174, 175. Let my cry come before Thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to Thy Word. I have longed for Thy salvation, O Lord; and Thy law is my delight. Let my soul live, and it shall praise Thee; and let Thy judgments help me.

O Lord, my God, in all my pain and sorrow I will look to Thee alone. I will not look around me, for here there are none but weak human beings; but I will look above me, to heaven, to Thee, O almighty God. O let Thy grace support me, and Thy arm deliver me. Save me, O God of my salvation, and I shall be saved.

Jer. 31: 13. I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow.

O my God, deliver me from my burden. Delay not longer with Thy help. Turn my mourning into joy, and make me rejoice from my sorrow. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength and my refuge is in God.

Ps. 121: 1, 2. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

O Lord, Triune God! In Thee have I put all my trust; my soul fainteth for Thee. Lord God the Father, have mercy upon me and my child. Lord Jesus, strengthen and sustain me. O Holy Ghost, give me the consolation that I shall soon be made to rejoice, and shall be delivered, and quickened, and helped. O Triune God, have mercy upon me.

Hab. 2: 3. For the vision [the promise of divine help] is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.

O yes, my God, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me and help me. O let the hour of Thy help come. In the meantime I will continue in prayer and supplication, and say, "Lord Jesus, help me to overcome; Lord Jesus, help me to wrestle." My delivery, my life, my help, are in Thy hands.

Ps. 13: 1-3. How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? Consider and hear me.

O my gracious and merciful God! Since Thy help delays, I tremble; yet I will not despair. Thou art my Father, and I am Thy child. O hide not Thy face from me any longer. Speak but the word, and I shall be whole. When Thou speakest, it is done; when Thou commandest, it stands fast. Lord, in mercy hear me.

Jer. 17: 14, 17. Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for Thou art my praise. Be not a terror unto me: Thou art my hope in the day of evil.

O Jesus, all my hope is now in Thee and Thy almighty power. Help me, O Saviour, speedily, if it be Thy holy will. Save me, and let me rejoice in Thy salvation. O how I shall laud and magnify Thy name when Thou shalt have graciously delivered me! My help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

Ps. 13: 5, 6. But I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because He hath dealt bountifully with me.

O Thou faithful Saviour and loving Friend! When Thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto Thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek. I know that Thou canst help and dost gladly help.

Therefore I hope in Thee. From moment to moment do I hope. O God, let this be the time. Lord help me in Thy mercy. My hope stands firm in Thee.

Lament. 3: 18-21. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord: remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope.

O yes, my God remembers me. Therefore I say, "The Lord remembers me and blesses me, and lets His face shine." Though my own power is weak, and I have no strength to labor, yet I have power and strength in and through God. I shall yet rejoice in Thy salvation.

Ps. 71: 20, 21. Thou, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side.

O God, if Thou hast decreed that I shall suffer great distress and pain, O do not let them be too severe. Thou knowest my power of endurance; and the amount of my strength is not hidden from Thee. O quicken me therefore. When I sink, lift me up; when I faint, refresh me; when

I am weary, give me new strength. Lord, God of my life, preserve my life and that of my child. Then I will praise and bless Thy name for ever.

Isa. 12: 2, 5. Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Sing unto the Lord; for He hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

O yes, my God, this is my consolation, that my sufferings shall have a good and happy end, because Thou art my Strength, my Help, and my Deliverance. If I have God with me, I am safe. Therefore I will be calm and hopeful. In quietness and confidence shall be my strength. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Ps. 22: 11, 15. Be not far from me; for trouble is near; for there is none to help. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws.

Yea, Thy love and faithfulness, O my Jesus, are the ground of my hope and confidence. Thou hast loved me with an everlasting love; and in Thy love Thou hast often helped and delivered me. Therefore I hope that Thou wilt quicken me this time also. Although my need is great, and

help still seems distant, and my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth for weariness, my heart is still fixed on Thee, and still trusts that Thou wilt bring my sufferings to a happy conclusion. This I believe, this I know. O Lord, strengthen my faith and confidence.

Lament. 3: 22, 24. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my' portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in Him.

O my gracious God, Thy mercies are not only new to me every morning, but every moment. Thou strengthenest and sustainest me continually. How could I undergo all this without Thee? Thy visitation has preserved my spirit. Thou hast strengthened head and hands. Consequently, I am not forsaken. The Lord departs not from me, neither do I depart from Him. The hour of help will soon come, because I have with me Him from whom all help cometh.

Ps. 4: 1, 3. Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer. But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto Him.

O my God, I know that Thou ever hearest me. Therefore will I trust in Thee in this time of distress. If fierce tempests come, I will cling faithfully to Thee. If Thou ledest me in mysterious ways, lead me safely. I know that Thou art with me, even though Thou hast not yet revealed Thy help. And meanwhile I say, Make haste to help me, O Lord, my Strength.

Lament. 3: 25, 26. The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

Yes, my God, my soul waiteth for Thee, and my trust is unshaken. O loving Jesus, quicken me with Thy grace in my distress. Strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees. I hope in Thy mercy; I wait for Thy salvation; I comfort myself with Thy grace. O Thou God of all mercy, Thou Helper in distress, let me experience Thy mercy.

Ps. 17: 6-8. I have called upon Thee, for Thou wilt hear me, O God: incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. Show Thy loving-kindness, O Thou that savest by Thy right hand them which put their trust in Thee from those that rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.

O Lord, preserve me and my child from harm. Hide us both under the shadow of Thy wings. Hear my supplications, and help me. If the pains become more severe, let me experience Thy help more strongly. I trust in Thee still, even though it seems as if Thou wouldest slay me. O, Thy hand is not shortened. I look not upon my own impotence, but upon Thee, Thou gracious, strong, and merciful God.

Job 5: 18, 19. For He maketh sore, and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole. He shall deliver Thee in six troubles: yea, in seven there shall no evil touch thee.

O God! The knowledge that in days gone by Thou hast so frequently helped me, gives me courage to hope that this time Thou wilt also be my God, my Deliverer, and my Saviour. Thou art still as mighty as Thou wast before. Since Thou hast helped so many others, reveal Thy goodness in me also. Then when Thy help has come, my mouth shall be filled with Thy praise, and I will say: "This God has done. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Deut. 4: 31. For the Lord thy God is a merciful God; He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He sware unto them.

O my Father, remember the covenant which Thou hast made with me in Holy Baptism. Remember that Thou art my Father, and that I am Thy child. O Jesus, remember that Thou hast washed and cleansed me with Thy holy blood. To Thee I flee, and pray for help in my distress. O deliver me; quicken me; cause me to rejoice.

Lament. 3: 31-33. For the Lord will not cast off forever: but though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies. For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

O yes, my Shepherd will not forsake His sheep, nor my Father His child. Since Thou hast distressed me, do Thou also make me rejoice again. Since Thou hast bestowed a blessing upon me, let me also behold it. O Jesus, lay my child alive in my arms. I will lay it again in Thy loving arms through Holy Baptism, and thus give back to Thee what Thou hast given to me. If it is mine according to nature and earthly birth, it shall become Thine by the new birth.

Ps. 68: 19, 20. (Rev. Vers.) Blessed be the Lord, who daily beareth our burden, even the God who is our salvation. God is unto us a God of deliverances; and unto Jehovah the Lord belong the issues from death.

O Lord, Thou hast laid this burden upon me; do Thou also remove it. Thou art the Refuge and Helper of all believers. O how easy it is for Thee to deliver me, and to loose my bonds! With Thee nothing is impossible. Let me remain steadfast in this confidence till the hour of my redemption has come.

Ps. 50: 15. Call upon me in the day of trouble:
I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

O my God, I wait for Thy help. Without Thee I am wholly forsaken. Therefore I call upon Thee in my trouble. Save me, hear me, have mercy upon me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free Spirit.

Ps. 30: 8, 10. I cried to Thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made supplication. Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me: Lord, be Thou my helper.

O Lord Jesus, let Thy hour of help arrive soon. I wait for Thee with longing. Meanwhile I will pray and sigh unto Thee. Thou wilt hear and help me according to Thy promise.

Ps. 109: 21, 26. But do Thou for me, O God the Lord, for Thy name's sake: because Thy mercy is good, deliver Thou me. Help me, O Lord my God: O save me according to Thy mercy.

This is my consolation in all my sufferings, that God, the mighty Defender of His children, is with me. To Him I commend myself. He will do all things well.

(If it looks as if death were approaching, the Sentences, Scripture Passages and Prayers for the Dying, given in the Daily Hand-book, should be used.

FOR THE USE OF MOTHERS.

THE MOTHER THANKS GOD FOR HER HAPPY DELIVERY.

MEDITATION.

THE Saviour says, John 16:21: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come; but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." This is a truth which God lets pious wives experience. As soon as the child is born, they forget their sorrow, and give thanks to God.

They should praise God (1) for the almighty power by which He has preserved them, and for the gracious help which He has given. For they must acknowledge that without the special help of God all their efforts would have been vain. (2) They should praise Him for His mercy, in that He graciously shortened and alleviated their pain. (3) They should thank Him for letting them behold their child alive. Or, if the child should happen to be dead, they should thank Him, that He has received it into His everlasting joy and glory, and, in His mercy, has given

to it, instead of the earthly life, eternal life in heaven.

They should (4) allow themselves to enjoy the rest which their confinement gives them, and should not shorten it from vanity, or false economy, or by needless exertions. For if women in confinement endeavor to show how strong they are by going around before they have granted themselves sufficient time for rest, they often bring dangerous diseases upon themselves, or burden themselves with bodily ailments. And then they have no one to blame for subsequent troubles but themselves and their own imprudence in seeking to be wiser than God, who appointed a period of rest for them, because He regarded it as necessary, while they regarded it as unnecessary and made light of it. Husbands also should do all in their power to let their wives secure the proper rest, according to God's ordinance, Lev. 12, and not make them over-exert themselves, nor compel them to leave their bed before the proper time.

The mother should (5) pray to God daily to guard her and her child against all evil and harm, thus commending herself and her child to God in prayer. Finally, she should (6) pray God to restore her to health and strength, and enable her in time joyfully to go about her usual

employment and attend the services in His house.

PRAYER.

Great and glorious and almighty God! I come into Thy presence with joy, and praise Thee for the great kindness which Thou hast shown me. I thank Thee that Thou hast sustained me in my labor, lightened my pain, and granted me a happy delivery. Lord, how great and glorious is Thy power! When I was about to sink, Thou didst hold me up; when I was weak and faint, Thou didst quicken me; when my strength was all gone, Thou didst give me new strength. Yes, Thou hast done all things well: Thou hast given me my child, Thou hast sustained my life, Thou hast warded off all misfortune, Thou hast gladdened me according to my heart's desire.

Therefore bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits. The Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. Blessed be the Lord, because He hath heard the voice of my supplications. The Lord is my Strength and my Shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth; and with my song will I praise Him. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; and His mercy endur-

eth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy. Let those whom He delivered out of their troubles when they cried, and whom He saved out of their distress, praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men. Let them sacrifice the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing. Yes, my God, I will declare Thy works to-day with rejoicing, and say: What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?

O my God, let Thy mercy be revealed in me in future also. Protect, strengthen, and preserve me during my confinement. Guard me and my child against harm, sickness, and dangerous accidents. Restore to me speedily my lost strength; let me regain it day by day. O God of all grace and mercy, spread Thy gracious wings over my house to preserve it from danger by fire or water; and over my bed, that I may stay well, and may spend my time in it in Thy fear and in prayer. Mercifully preserve my child to Thy honor and glory. And grant me grace in due time, with restored strength and in good health, to wend my way to Thy house, to appear in Thy presence, and to bring to Thee there my joyful offering of praise and thanksgiving. Now thank we all our God, with hearts

and hands and voices, who wondrous things hath done, in whom this earth rejoices; who from our mother's arms hath blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours to-day. Amen.

HYMN.

(Sei Lob und Ehr dem höchsten Gut.)

Iambic, 8, 7, 8, 8, 7.

Sing praise to God who reigns above,

The God of all creation,

The God of power, the God of love,

The God of our salvation.

With healing balm my soul He fills,

And every faithless murmur stills;

To God all praise and glory!

The angel host, O King of kings,

Thy praise for ever telling,

In earth and sky all living things,

Beneath Thy shadow dwelling,

Adore the wisdom which could span,

And power which formed creation's plan;

To God all praise and glory!

I cried to God in my distress,

His mercy heard me calling;

My Saviour saw my helplessness,

And kept my feet from falling;

For this, Lord, praise and thanks to Thee!

Praise God Most High, praise God with me!

To God all praise and glory!

Thus all my gladsome way along

I'll sing aloud Thy praises,

That men may hear the grateful song

My voice unwearied raises:

Be joyful in the Lord, my heart!

Both soul and body, bear your part!

To God all praise and glory!

—*John Jacob Schuetz, 1673.*

Frances Elizabeth Cox, Tr. 1864. a.

THE MOTHER'S MORNING PRAYER.

MEDITATION.

IF prayer and supplications to God should form the daily duty of every pious Christian, how much more should not the mother in confinement begin and close the day with prayer, in view of the many dangers which may threaten her and her child. When she has commended herself and her child into the hands of God, she can lean all the more confidently upon God's help. She should (1) thank God for the repose which He granted her during the night, and should commit herself and her child to Him, praying that He may guard, bless, and preserve them. (2) Throughout the day she should let her thoughts dwell upon holy things, and gratefully enjoy the rest which is vouchsafed to her. And if she still, as is usually the case, suffers some pain, she should (3) bear it with patience, and believe that the God who has so gloriously

delivered her out of her troubles will also in time remove the pain which still remains.

PRAYER.

O gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! In this morning hour I lift up my heart and voice and hands to Thee, and thank Thee for the gracious protection which Thou hast vouchsafed to me during the past night. Thine angel has kept watch over my bed, and no harm has touched me. Thou hast preserved me and my child, and hast let me joyfully behold again the light of day. Lord, Lord, how great are Thy mercies! They are new unto me every morning. Thy grace has sheltered and guarded me during the night; Thy mercy has kept me from harm. This Thou, O God, hast done; this is the work of Thy love and faithfulness. Therefore arise my soul, and bless the Lord who has done such great things for thee.

Lord, Lord, Thou hast been this night, as Thou hast ever been, my Stay. Thou hast preserved me, and let me experience how gracious, how mighty, how all-powerful, how loving, how kind Thou art. Lord, Lord, I will never forget what good things Thou hast done for me. I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof

and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. I cried in my trouble, and the Lord heard me, and saved me out of all my troubles. Therefore my mouth shall be filled with His praise, and my heart shall give thanks to Him. Yea, with folded hands will I extol His mercy.

O Lord, Lord, let Thy fatherly mercy guard me this day also. I commend to Thee my body and my soul. O preserve my soul and mind from despondency, anxiety and sadness, and let Thy Holy Spirit dwell in my heart to sanctify and fill it with heavenly joy and consolation, that I may spend the day in Thy fear, in inward peace through the love of Jesus, and in child-like contentment. Restore to my body day by day the strength which I have lost; and grant me speedy restoration to complete health. Ward off from me all pain, accidents, sickness, and misfortune, and lighten the sufferings which in Thy wisdom Thou wilt yet bring upon me. Graciously preserve my child, and let it grow and thrive to Thy glory.

And now, O Triune God, I commend myself entirely to Thee. Lord God the Father in heaven, have mercy upon me. Be gracious to me and my child; forgive my sins, bless me, and preserve me from all evil. Lord God the Son, Re-

deemer of the world, have mercy upon me. Be my Advocate and Intercessor, my Jesus, my Saviour; and let Thy grace, like cooling dew, refresh me this day. Be with me, strengthen me, and keep me. Lord God the Holy Ghost, have mercy upon me. Pray in me, and bear witness with my spirit that I am indeed a child of God. And now, the Lord bless me and keep me. The Lord make His face shine upon me and be gracious unto me. The Lord lift up His countenance upon and give me peace. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep my heart and mind in Christ Jesus unto everlasting life. Amen.

HYMN.

(Gott des Himmels und der Erden.)

8, 7, 7, 7.

God, who madest earth and heaven,
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Who the day and night hast given
Sun and moon and starry host,
Thou whose mighty hand sustains
Earth and all that she contains:

Praise to Thee my soul shall render,
Who this night hast guarded me;
My omnipotent Defender,
Who from ill dost set me free:
Free from danger, anguish, woe,
Free from the infernal foe.

Let the night of my transgression
 With night's darkness pass away;
 Jesus, into Thy possession
 I resign myself to-day.
 In Thy wounds I find relief
 From my greatest sin and grief.

Wholly to Thy blest protection
 I commit my heart and mind.
 Mighty God! to Thy direction
 Wholly may I be resigned.
 Lord, my Shield, my Light divine,
 O accept, and own me Thine!

Lord, to me Thine angel sending,
 Keep me from the subtle foe;
 From His craft and might defending,
 Never let Thy wanderer go,
 Till my final rest be come,
 And Thine angel bear me home.

—*Henry Albert, 1644.*
John Christian Jacobi, Tr. 1722,
and Arthur Tozer Russell, 1848.

THE MOTHER'S EVENING PRAYER.

MEDITATION.

WHEN the two disciples met Jesus on their way to Emmaus, they were unwilling to let Him leave them when evening came, but said, "Abide with us, Lord, for it is toward evening, and the day is far

spent." Luke 24. This should be the mother's desire also. She should begin and end her day with prayer, and should beseech God for His special gracious presence to protect her during the coming night.

She should (1) thank God for guarding her during the day against pain and accidents, and for keeping her child well. If, however, He has been pleased to send her some measure of pain, she should (2) thank Him for enabling her to bear it by His grace, and to reach the evening. (3) She should commend herself and her child to the care of the Triune God during the coming night. Accidents are distressing and cause fright to all; but they are much more distressing to mothers in confinement, who are powerless to flee from danger, and too weak to endure much pain. (4) When she has prayed, she should refrain from causing herself unnecessary care, anxiety, fear, or fright, but fall asleep in the arms of God. And when she awakes again, she should think of God, rejoice in His grace, and surrender herself to Him.

PRAYER.

O Lord God Almighty! How shall I sufficiently thank Thee for the love and faithfulness which Thou hast revealed toward me to-day? I have spent this day under Thy protection, and have

reached the evening unharmed. Thou hast helped me to endure the pain and discomfort of my condition. Thou hast guarded and preserved me. Thou hast been a gracious Father, Protector, and Stay to me and my child. Lord when I cried unto Thee, Thou didst make me whole. Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; Thou hast given me beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Lord, my God, I will thank Thee to all eternity.

And since Thou hast spread Thy gracious wings over me during the day, let Thy goodness keep me during the night, and defend me and mine and my house against misfortune, danger, and harm. Mercifully forgive me all the sins which I have committed against Thee to-day by thoughts or words or deeds. I will now, O God of grace and mercy, lay myself in Thy arms, and say: "I will both lay me down in peace and sleep: for Thou, Lord only makest me dwell in safety." Command Thy angel to come and guard me, that Satan may not disturb or harm me. In Thy name I will close my eyes. Do Thou watch over my bed, and chase away whatever might disturb my repose. And though the body sleeps, my soul shall wake to Thee, be with Thee, and find its delight in Thee.

Lord God the Father, let Thy mercy be over me this night, that I may rejoice in Thy almighty power, goodness, and love, even in sleep. Lord Jesus, Thou Light of my soul, let the light of Thy grace shine around me this night, that I may comfort myself with Thy wounds and blood, and preserve Thy image in my heart. O blessed Holy Spirit, awake in me holy desires and longings; sing and pray within my heart, and seal upon me the assurance that I am a child of God. O Thou Triune God, let me thus fall asleep in Thy love, repose softly in Thy grace, and, when I awake, be still with Thee. Let me behold the morrow well and happy. Then will I thank Thee for all the benefits which Thou hast bestowed upon me in body and soul. The mercy of the Father defend me, the love of Jesus shield me, the grace of the Holy Spirit strengthen and support me. Amen.

HYMN.

(Hinunter ist der Sonnenschein.)

L. M.

Sunk is the sun's last beam of light,
And now the world is wrapped in night;
Christ, light us with Thy heavenly ray,
Nor let our feet in darkness stray.

Thanks, Lord, that Thou throughout the day
Hast kept all grief and harm away;

That angels tarried round about
Our coming in and going out.

Whate'er of wrong we've done or said,
Let not the charge on us be laid;
That, through Thy free forgiveness blest,
In peaceful slumber we may rest.

Thy guardian angels round us place,
All evil from our couch to chase;
Our soul and body, while we sleep,
In safety, gracious Father, keep.

—*Nicholas Herrmann, 1560.*

Frances Elizabeth Cox, Tr., 1841. a.

THE MOTHER OFFERS UP A PRAYER FOR HER CHILD.

MEDITATION.

THE possession of children involves on the part of parents not only the responsibility of caring for them, but also the duty of loving them and seeking their temporal and eternal welfare. Parents should pray for these things, because they are among the good gifts which come down from above, from the Father of lights.

A pious mother should, therefore, (1) humbly commend her new-born child to God, and pray Him to let it receive Holy Baptism, and to accept it in that sacrament as His child, and as an

object of His care, love, and grace. If God spares the child's life, then (2) it should be included in her morning and evening devotions, and in many special prayers throughout the day. She should beseech God to rule it with His Holy Spirit, and to vouchsafe to it a good heart, a sound constitution, and healthy growth; to preserve its limbs and senses; and to guard it against accident and harm.

The care and prayers of godly parents for their children (3) increase as the years roll on; to the end, that their children may be instructed and established in Christian doctrine, and brought to the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. To secure for them this treasure, parents should spare neither cost nor trouble. If the children in later years go away among strangers, or are obliged to live in the midst of worldly people, the care and anxiety of the parents for them increase. Parents should then (4) pray all the more earnestly. They should do as Job did, who offered burnt offerings for his children every evening, and prayed God to be merciful to them, and to forgive them their sins. Pious parents should beseech God to guard their children against temptation, to preserve them from falling into gross sin and shame, to lead them by His Holy Spirit, and to bless them in time and eternity.

If they have done their duty toward their children in the matter of Christian instruction and sensible training, they should (5) believe that God will hear their prayer; and that, even if their children should for a time go astray, He will yet know how to show them the error of their way, and bring them back to Himself. (6) They should patiently, and in reliance upon God's grace, bear the cross which, in accordance with His wonderful counsel, the care of children lays upon them, until in His own time He lightens it or removes it according to His loving-kindness.

PRAYER WHEN THE CHILD IS ABOUT TO BE BAPTIZED.

O GRACIOUS and merciful God, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named! Behold I come before Thee in true humility of heart, and pray for my newborn child. O merciful God, receive my child as Thine own in Holy Baptism. Let it become and remain Thy child. Protect and keep it by Thy grace. Thou, O Jesus, hast said, Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not. Behold I bring my child to Thee to-day; grant that it may be born again of water and of the Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit may sanctify

and rule it, and fill its heart with faith and heavenly light. Let the child grow up to Thy glory, and grant me grace to train it in Thy fear and service.

O my God, I herewith give Thee back my child to be Thine own possession. I lay it, heavenly Father, in the arms of Thy mercy; do Thou care for it and defend it. I yield it up to Thee, O Jesus. Wash it with Thy holy blood, and hide it in Thy wounds from the power of Satan. I commit it to Thy guidance, O God the Holy Ghost. Sanctify it wholly, that its whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let this day be my child's covenant-day and day of blessing and regeneration. Grant that it may ever be mindful of this day, and that I may often call its attention to it. May it never break this covenant, nor fall from this state of grace, but continue in faith and holiness to the end, and be received by Thee, as Thy child and heir, into everlasting joy. Amen.

PRAYER OF PIOUS PARENTS FOR THEIR CHILDREN.

O LORD God Almighty, Father of all grace and mercy! Behold, among Thy many blessings Thou hast also bestowed children upon me; and for these I give Thee heartfelt praise and thanks. But my God, when I regard my children as a trust which Thou hast committed to me, which Jesus has redeemed with His precious blood, and which Thou hast received in Holy Baptism as Thy children, I am concerned not to lose any of them by my fault.

Thou sayest to me and to all parents: "Keep this child; if by any means it be missing, then shall thy life be for its life." Therefore, O Father of all grace, I come to Thee and pray for my children. I will do what I can! but do Thou care for them. Bless them; guide them as they go out and in; keep them in Thy holy fear, that they may never offend nor grieve Thee by great sins, nor bring harm and disgrace upon themselves. Let their hearts be fixed on Jesus. Let Jesus dwell in their heart and sanctify it, that they may not lose Thy favor nor have an evil conscience. Guard them against temptation and wicked companions. Let Thy Holy Spirit constantly remind them of Thy holy presence, that

they may remember that Thou art with them at home and abroad, by day and by night, in society and in solitude. Let Thy angel accompany them when they go out and in, and preserve them when they travel or attend to their occupation or are among strangers. Let Thy angel be their constant companion as he was Tobias'. Let Thy angels lead them away from danger as they did Lot. Let Thy angels protect them as they did Jacob.

Shouldest Thou be pleased, however, to send a cross of some kind upon me through my children, whether by death or sickness or misfortune, grant me patience under my suffering, and let me bear in mind that nothing can happen without Thy permission. Thou hast given me my children; Thou also hast power to take them to Thyself again. Shouldest Thou seek by their death to draw me nearer to Thee, so that I may be taught to love Thee alone, O then, on my thorny path, preserve my trust and hope in Thy omnipotence, that I may believe that Thou canst and wilt make my cross, as well as all things, work for my good.

Bless my children in earthly matters also. Provide for them and sustain them. Give them food and clothing, and deal with them as a loving Father. Be their Helper in danger, their Stay in trouble, their Counselor in perplexity,

their Preserver in misfortune, their Physician in sickness. Give them a good disposition, an understanding mind, and a healthy body. Let them live as in Thy sight, and honor and praise Thee. Give them an obedient and humble heart. Let them grow up under Thy favor, and be a source of joy and comfort to me.

O God, hear my prayer, and remember that they are Thy children as well as mine. Let my prayer for them come before Thy throne of grace, and be heard. Let me, on the last day, stand together with all my children on Thy right hand, and say to Thy praise: Behold, here am I, my God, and the children which Thou hast given me; I have lost none of them. Yea, my God, grant that none of my children may be lost, but that together we may enter into Thy glory. Amen.

HYMN.

8, 7.

Saviour, who Thy flock art feeding
With the Shepherd's kindest care,
All the feeble gently leading,
While the lambs Thy bosom share:

Now these little ones receiving,
Fold them in Thy gracious arm;
There we know, Thy Word believing,
Only there, secure from harm.

Never, from Thy pasture roving,
Let them be the lion's prey;
Let Thy tenderness, so loving,
Keep them through life's dangerous way.

Then within Thy fold eternal
Let them find a resting place,
Feed in pastures ever vernal,
Drink the rivers of Thy grace.

—William Augustus Muhlenberg, 1826.

THE MOTHER PREPARES FOR HER CHURCHING.

MEDITATION.

WHEN God has graciously permitted the mother to pass through the six weeks after her confinement, and has restored her strength and preserved her and her child from harm, so that she is now able to attend to her churching, she should be filled with gratitude, and should give thanks and praise to God in the highest.

She should reflect (1) how she lay weak and helpless in bed, and how God has renewed her strength so that now she is able to go about strong and healthy. She should remember (2) that other women in her condition have had to undergo much sickness, and after six weeks

were still confined to bed or perhaps were dead; and she should, therefore, sing hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God, who has preserved her from such a fate. When, in addition to this, her child is healthy and strong, she has all the more reason (3) humbly to acknowledge the benefits of God. She should (4) attend to her churching with devout and grateful heart. She should rejoice when she enters into the courts of the Lord and draws nigh to His altar. She should (5) present her prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving, praise God, commend herself and her child to Him, receive the benediction, and ever afterwards remember God's goodness to her.

PRAYER.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me? Yes, the Lord hath done great things for me, whereof I am glad. O gracious and mighty God! I am now about to go to Thy house again for the first time, to thank Thee in Thy temple for Thy gracious help and mighty succor. Lord God, Thou hast happily delivered me, preserved my life, and let me look with joy upon the face of my child. Thou hast kept me, O gracious God, through these six weeks, preserved me from harm, and restored my strength, so that I am now able in health and comfort to

go to Thy house. O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; and His mercy endureth forever. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me and set me in a large place. The Lord is my Strength and my Song, and He is become my Salvation.

Lord, I thank Thee that Thou didst preserve my life during my labor; I thank Thee that Thou hast restored my strength; I thank Thee that by Thy grace I am now able to go out, and to extol Thee in Thy temple for all Thy benefits. O Lord, accept my weak offering of praise. I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within Thy gates, O Jerusalem. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

O my God, let my going out be blessed; give me new strength every day; let my child grow up to Thy praise. I bring to Thee to-day a pair of turtle-doves: my grateful heart and my adoring tongue. O do not despise my offering. I bring to Thee in true faith the perfect atoning sacrifice of the blood and death of Jesus. With this I cleanse and purify myself. I also offer to to Thee again my child, as I have already offered

it in Holy Baptism. Be Thou its Father, its Guadian, its Preserver, its gracious God. Let the wings of Thy mercy be spread over me and my child in time to come. Let us live before Thee and praise Thy name. Grant that I may always remember this Thy great benefit to me, so that I may continue in faith and holiness, walk in Thy fear, and train up my children also in Thy fear and love. Grant to me and my children Thy Holy Spirit, that He may enlighten, sanctify, rule, and guide us in the right way, till at last we shall all enter into Thy glory, into the new Jerusalem, where Thou Thyself art the Sun and the Light. Amen.

HYMN.

Psalm 100.

L. M.

Before Jehovah's awful throne,
Ye nations, bow with sacred joy:
Know that the Lord is God alone,
He can create, and He destroy.

His sovereign power, without our aid,
Made us of clay, and formed us men;
And when like wandering sheep we strayed,
He brought us to His fold again.

We are His people, we His care,
Our souls and all our mortal frame:
What lasting honors shall we rear,
Almighty Maker, to Thy name?

We'll crowd Thy gates with thankful songs,
High as the heavens our voices raise;
And Earth, with her ten thousand tongues,
Shall fill Thy courts with sounding praise.

Wide as the world is Thy command,
Vast as eternity Thy love;
Firm as a rock Thy truth must stand
When rolling years shall cease to move.

—Isaac Watts, 1719. a.

THE PIOUS MOTHER THANKS GOD
WHEN SHE WEANS HER CHILD.

MEDITATION.

SINCE a pious mother should pray daily for her child, she should pray all the more earnestly at the time of its weaning. For it is a signal mercy of God that He has let the child thrive upon its mother's milk to such an extent as to make it strong enough now to be weaned.

She should therefore (1) thank God that He has granted the child sufficient strength through the milk to enable it now to live upon other food. If she has nursed her child herself, she should (2) thank God especially for giving her good milk, adding His blessing to it, and letting the child thrive upon it. She should (3) pray God to bless the child's food in future, to let it grow

up to His praise, and, as it grows in years, to fill its heart with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And since children usually learn to walk at this age, she should (4) pray God to lead her child, to guard it by His holy angels, to preserve it from severe falls, to keep its limbs straight and sound, and thus to let it grow from year to year under His protection.

PRAYER.

Merciful and gracious God! How my heart rejoices to know that the time has come when my child is strong enough to be weaned! O loving God, Thou hast in Thy goodness bestowed this child upon me, preserved it amid so many perils, sustained its frail life, and permitted it to reach an age at which it needs stronger food for its sustenance. I extol Thy mercy, which has blessed my mother's milk to the strengthening and growth of my child. I thank Thee for Thy blessing, for Thy protection, for Thy faithfulness and grace. O Lord, Thou dost daily perform a miracle by turning food and drink into milk in the mother's breast, and giving to that milk the power to satisfy, sustain, and strengthen the child.

O my God, as Thou hast let my child thrive at its mother's breast, so do Thou now let it thrive upon other food and drink. Grant that it may

take kindly to the change in its diet, and grow upon it day by day, and week by week, and year by year. When it begins to walk, be with it; let Thy angel accompany it; uphold it when it would fall, protect it when danger threatens. O let my child be commended to Thy care in body and soul.

Strengthen it also in the inward man. Sanctify it by Thy Holy Spirit, that it may be easily trained in obedience and the fear of God, be free from obstinacy, and, as a good child, listen and obey willingly. Give unto it Thy Holy Spirit and a godly heart, that I may have pleasure in my child here, and may one day enter with it into the eternal joy and glory of heaven. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

What shall I render to my God
For all His gifts to me?
Sing, heaven and earth, rejoice and praise
His glorious majesty.

O let me praise Thee while I live,
And praise Thee when I die,
And praise Thee when I rise again,
And to eternity.

Mysterious depths of endless love
Our admiration raise:
My God, Thy name exalted is
Far above all our praise.

—John Mason, 1683.

CONSOLATION FOR THE BARREN.

CONSOLATION.

I HAVE often heard pious wives whom God has let remain childless say, that there are, indeed, consolations, meditations and prayers for all conditions of women, for the pregnant, for those in travail, and those in confinement, but that those who have no children are left without such devotional helps. For this reason, after having by the grace of God imparted instruction and consolation to the fruitful, I will now speak to the barren concerning their condition.

When God lets husband and wife remain childless, so that they must say with Abraham, Gen. 15:2, "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless," they should remember (1) that the reasons for the barrenness may be natural to either or both of them. For as God does not make all human beings alike, so He does not make them all of equal fruitfulness. If, therefore, God has not blessed their nature with this gift, they should not murmur against Him, but should remember that He is nevertheless a gracious God, who loves them and regards them with favor. Though the tulip has not as many flowers as the rose bush, it is still a treasured plant of the gardener and of the owner of the

garden. How many trees there are which bear no fruit, but which grace the garden and which we like to see there. So also the barren are God's dear children, even though they are not blessed with fruitfulness like others.

They should remember, (2) that children are a gift of the Lord. Those upon whom He does not desire to bestow this gift should not murmur against Him on this account, nor be envious of others who are more favored in this respect. God is the Master in His own house; and He divides out his treasures as it pleases Him. God has reserved to Himself three keys; the key to the grave,—for no one but God can wake the dead; the key to the rain,—for no idol and no human being can cause it to rain; and the key to the womb,—for none can open it if God closes it, nor close it if God opens it. Since therefore this withholding of the blessing of wedlock is due to God's will, the barren are called upon to give proof of their patience, resignation, and hope.

Barrenness is (3) not a sign of God's wrath. For the barren can see that God is not angry with them from the fact that He does not let them lack His benefits in other respects. He gives them bodily blessings, health, and temporal prosperity in a degree in which He often does not give them to those who have children.

The latter often suffer much from sickness, and sorrow, and cares which the possession of children involves. God also gives to the childless heavenly gifts, joy in God, peace with God, the righteousness of Christ, and spiritual gladness. And these things show that God is not angry with them. For one who is under the wrath of God will certainly lack these heavenly gifts.

Childless couples should remember (4) that God means to show them special grace by His dealings with them, because He knows their bodily and mental condition better than they do themselves. For although many wives love children, God still finds them perhaps too weak to bear children, or to train them up, or to endure the burden of having a family of children. Perhaps a child would cause husband and wife too many distractions and cares, and hinder them in their prayers and service of God. Yes, perhaps the child would have to die according to God's will, and its death would cause them too much sorrow. Therefore, because God knows the strength or weakness of men better than they do themselves, He shows them a special kindness by withholding children, a kindness, however, which in their ignorance they regard as an unkindness.

Especially should married couples (5) be careful not to try to force children from God by mur-

muring and complaining against Him; for in that case God may give them children in anger. And then the murmuring mother must either lose her life or her health in giving birth to the child, or else the child, given in anger, will cause its parents untold sorrow, anxiety, and heart-ache, and make their whole subsequent life wretched. This will then be the result of their own foolish prayers. How many a son, obtained from God by imprudent prayer, has been the death of his father and the scourge of his mother.

Godly wives should (6) not misinterpret the words of St. Paul in I Tim. 2; 15, when he says that "the woman shall be saved in childbearing, if she continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." In these words Paul does not mean that women are to be saved *by* childbearing. For we are justified and saved only through the merit of Jesus Christ and for the sake of His blood which was shed for us, Rom. 3:28, Rom. 5:1, and not by childbearing. If this were not the case, then no virgin could be saved, and such an idea certainly is contrary to God's holy Word.

Paul uses these words for the purpose of comforting married persons, teaching them, that although God lays great pain upon those who bear children, because woman let herself be deceived in Eden, He will nevertheless be with them and

help them in childbearing. They shall nevertheless be saved, even though they feel the anger of God in the pangs of labor, provided they continue in faith in the Lord Jesus, in love toward God and men, and in holiness and sobriety of living. For this reason this passage of Scripture is a comfort in times of travail, and an assurance that those who die in labor shall be saved in spite of the pains which sin has brought upon them. But the passage does not give childbearing as the reason why women are saved.

Married couples should (7) await God's time, and continue in prayer. Some trees bear fruit the first year, some only after the lapse of many years. Therefore pious couples should not at once lose all hope. "Cast not away therefore your confidence [in God] which hath great recompense of reward." (Heb. 10:35.) Just as God does not bestow His other benefits all at the same time, so He may delay for a time with this gift also. Married couples should (8) carefully refrain from blaming one another, and should remember that it is God who withholds children from them, Gen. 30:2. They should love one another nevertheless, and be satisfied with God's dealings with them, remembering that neither of them can change matters, and that it rests with the blessing and will of God. Especially

should they avoid feelings of irritation, envy, and ill-will, if friends, brothers, or sisters should already make inquiry about the disposition and inheritance of their property. They should remain faithful in their love to one another, pay no attention to sycophants, and, when the proper time comes, make such disposition of their earthly property as the demands of propriety and love seem to require. If pious couples remain childless, they should (9) increase all the more in love to Jesus. And since those who have children are often hindered by their children in their prayers, worship, and edification, those who have none can devote themselves all the more freely and undisturbed to the service of God.

If God bestows upon married persons no children of their own, they should (10) let their love go out all the more to the poor: they should show kindness to good children, clothe them, and keep them at school. And then such children will, on the last day, point to such couples and praise them before God, saying, These persons have given me clothing and food and drink. Matt. 25.

God in His love and grace sometimes withholds children from godly persons (11) because He sees that dreadful plagues and punishments will break out in a community. If, in token of

His mercy, He takes away the righteous from the evil to come, and sends their last sleep upon His dear children before the storms of affliction come, as He promised in the case of Hezekiah and did in the case of Augustine; then it is really a kindness on God's part not to bestow children, so that they may not have to experience the wretchedness which shall come upon the world, as it did in the deluge.

Finally married couples should (12) inquire whether they regard children simply as a gift of nature or, as they are in truth, a gift of God. If they regard them as a gift of nature, whose bestowal is simply dependent upon themselves, they err. And God desires, by withholding children from them, to show them that children are His gift, and that He is to be asked for them. If Christian couples here object that fornicators and harlots do not pray for children and yet receive them, I reply, that in their case God let's nature have its course in order to reveal their shame, because their object is not to beget children to the glory of God, but simply to satisfy their own evil lusts. Godly couples should do as Isaac did, of whom we read, "And Isaac entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren: and the Lord was entreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived." Gen. 25:21. Godly couples should bear these things in mind,

and thereby guard themselves against impatience and dissatisfaction. They should remember that although their home be lonesome and childless, they shall, after their death, be received into glory and into the happy company of many thousands of holy angels, with whom they shall rejoice for ever before the throne of God.

PRAYER.

Lord, Lord, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless? O my God, I see how Thou hast bestowed the blessing of wedlock upon others in abundant measure, but from me Thou hast thus far withheld it. Lord, Lord, grant that I may resign myself to Thy will, and bear my trial patiently. I know that Thou art an almighty God, and that, if Thou wilt, Thou canst easily make me fruitful and give me children. I know also that Thou art a gracious God, who lovest me and who hast never denied me Thy favor. Therefore I will patiently submit to Thy will in this matter also. Thou knowest best why Thou hast not bestowed this blessing upon me. If it be that I am too weak to bear children, or too indolent to train them properly, or disposed to be too despondent under the cares which children bring with them, — then I recognize Thy goodness in withholding them and sparing me, lest I be tried above that I am able.

But if Thou wilt not give me the joy of having children, grant that I may all the more rejoice in Thee, love Thee fervently, and find all my joy and delight in Thee. Let me remain steadfast in my faith in Thee, O Triune God, in love toward my neighbor, and in holiness of life. Let me walk in all godliness and honesty in the sight of my fellowmen. Let Thy Holy Spirit convince my heart more and more that this is Thy holy will concerning me, and enable me cheerfully to resign myself to Thy will. Preserve my heart from envy, irritableness, impatience, and ill-will toward the partner of my married life, so that I may nevertheless love him from my heart, regard him in place of a child, and love him more than ten sons or daughters.

If, after I have waited a while longer, it be Thy will to make me a mother and to remember me as Thou didst Hannah, then convince my heart of this Thy gracious intention. But if Thou wilt not give me an heir at all, O Lord, then shall it be my only concern to walk in Thy statutes: Jesus shall be the consolation of my heart and my portion. Lord, Lord, all things are possible with Thee. It is but a small matter for Thee, who didst let Sarah conceive when she was long past the time of nature, to bless my hitherto childless state. Lord, bestow a child upon me, then will I thank Thee for the gift all

my life, and bring it up to Thy praise and glory. Let me not be envious when I see other homes which Thou hast filled with children, but let me show all the more love and mercy to poor and forsaken little ones, and clothe them, care for them, provide for them.

And now let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we hope in Thee. Gladden me, comfort me, help me. Grant me children, if it be Thy will, — but not in anger, nor as a punishment upon me, nor to my shame. If it be salutary for me, grant my prayer according to Thy mercy. But if it be not Thy will, I would not seek to compel Thee to give me a child; for I do not desire to receive anything, neither children nor anything else, contrary to Thy will. Lord, I have poured out my heart before Thee. I beseech Thee, do as Thou wilt, and as is best for me! Grant that I may possess my soul in patience, till Thou sendest the help I crave. Amen.

HYMN.

C. M.

Author of good! To Thee we turn:

Thine ever wakeful eye

Alone can all our wants discern,

Thy hand alone supply.

O let Thy love within us dwell,

Thy fear our footsteps guide!

That love shall vainer love expel,
That fear all fears beside.

And since, by passion's force subdued,
Too oft, with stubborn will,
We blindly shun the latent good,
And grasp the specious ill:

Not what we wish, but what we want,
Let mercy still supply:
The good, unasked, let mercy grant,
The ill, though asked, deny.

—*James Merrick, 1765.*

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